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THE

# 150TH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE

Pomfret, Conn.

^

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN POMFRET, CONN.,

OCTOBER 26, 1865.

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SERMON, HISTORICAL PAPERS, ADDRESSES,

WITH APPENDIX.

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TRANSCRIPT PRINT, DANIELSONVILLE.

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# S E R M O N .

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BY REV. WALTER S. ALEXANDER,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

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SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF POMFRET:—Gladly would I have deferred to the claims of age and wisdom, and as a delighted listener mingled with you with filial interest and devotion, in these services of commemoration. It is only by virtue of my official relation to this church, and yet with a love second to none, that I greet you on the conclusion of your pleasant pilgrimage to this spot, and bid you welcome to your early home and to the shrine of your mother church.

We invite you to devote the day to olden memories—to the warm greetings of friendship and to the cultivation of a higher love for the church and the faith that has come down to us through so honorable a succession.

The 150th Anniversary! Illustrious event in this changing world. On the 26th day of October, 1715,



our fathers organized this church. We, their children, meet to-day to commemorate the event by solemn religious service—to recall the memories of the olden time and to pledge ourselves anew to the work which the fathers have transmitted to us.

The claims of the day upon our affectionate and reverent regard will be gratefully conceded.

The long succession of events that have distinguished the history of this early church, is fraught with lessons of profoundest interest. The lives of the fathers, which are written in the annals of the church, are full of sublimity. Every line is suggestive of mighty truths in which our future is largely involved.

At the feet of the fathers let us sit to-day as devout and filial learners, as they in the infancy of the American church, sat at the feet of the Great Master, and gathered from His spirit the inspiration that made them mighty in faith and in deed.

It is our privilege to look back upon a noble line of ancestry, whose lives were made heroic by moral and spiritual conquests, rather than by deeds of knightly valor or the arts of successful war.

To their teachings and consecrated labors, we trace our valued inheritance—our exemptions from the moral evils that hold their carnival in prosperous cities and villages—and the brighter results that seem waiting at the doors of the church and which beckon us onward to the feast of spiritual in-gathering.

We find our satisfaction on this memorable day, not in the fact that the church planted by our fathers 150 years ago continues to live, but that she is clothed with beauty and grace; that her faith in the God of her fathers is strong—that she recognizes the obligation to fulfil the trust which they committed unto her, and that the promise of her infancy has not failed.

Regarding the mission upon which the fathers en-

tered as not only holy, but successful, it becomes the grateful duty of the hour to define the relation of the present to the past, and of the children to the fathers.

The subject for which I crave your sympathy, is :

#### THE INHERITANCE OF THE FATHERS.

Sixty-six years from the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, this ancient town of Pomfret was settled by twelve men and their families of the Puritan faith and character from Roxbury.

The Record of the noble men of 1620 has not been more sacredly guarded than that of our Pomfret fathers, in whose honor we have met and to whose memories we pay the filial tribute of our gratitude and love.

The first element of the inheritance into which we have entered, which is suggested by their honorable record, is;

#### (I.)

##### THEIR RELIGIOUS FAITH.

Their type of character was eminently religious. Their faith in the great truths of natural and revealed religion, was the central element which gave tone and form to the entire being. The school in which they were trained was adapted to develop the noblest energies of the nature, and make them what they were—men of earnest purpose and firm integrity. The men who were born in these early days and who survived the storms of adversity that swept over the early New England settlements, became, by the very culture of trial, strong and determined. Life in all its forms was earnest. They but breathed the spirit of the time.

Their principles assumed the stern character of the



age, and because of the intelligence and sincerity with which they were formed, and the christian fortitude with which they have been maintained, they have withstood the shocks of 150 years !

The men who planted the institutions of the Gospel on these hills, came freshly from the teachings of John Eliot, the beloved and devoted pastor of Roxbury. Imbued with his spirit, and indoctrinated with his faith, they came here the pioneers of a christian civilization.

By virtue of his pastoral office, Eliot himself came to this section, and proclaimed to the Indians, under the chieftainship of Uncas and Oweneco, the doctrine of " No King but Jesus."

The great Indian Apostle, the pastor of the first proprietors of the Mashmugget purchase, held up the cross, in view of these children of the forest, when their council fires were lighted within four miles of the spot upon which we now stand.

The original grant by which this territory was ceded by letters patent of the Crown to James Fitch of Norwich, afterward Colonial Governor of Connecticut, and by him to the six proprietors from Roxbury, bears date 1686.

Some considerable time must have elapsed before full possession was taken in person. Woodstock was settled at an earlier date, and enjoyed the advantage of stated worship and an organized church, while society here was in a state of embryo.

With that church the proprietors of Pomfret worshipped. The journey was long and difficult ; the way in the winter months being often blocked with snow. But their christian courage rose above opposing difficulties, and they found a way for themselves and their children to the house of God.

This fact is mentioned, that it may be understood that there was no interval in which the teachings of

Eliot were forgotten or the voice of holy confession was silent.

At the earliest practicable day they organized themselves into a township, and at the first town-meeting took active measures to secure an established ministry, and the preaching of the Gospel of Christ on these hills.

I submit the statement with confidence to your judgment, that no more honorable record can be found in the annals of Pomfret, than that which brings before us the fathers of the town, 150 years ago, engaged in earnest and solemn council, concerning the spiritual welfare of themselves and their children.

Bear with me as I read the imperishable record :—

“ May 3rd, 1713. At a meeting of the inhabitants and proprietors of Mashmugget, it being our indispensable duty as we would aim at the glory of the Lord our God, and consult not only the temporal and civil good, but also and especially the spiritual and eternal good of our own souls, and the souls of our dear wives and children : therefore to lay such a good foundation, and make such suitable provision as that we may have a Gospel minister settled amongst us, and enjoy God in all his holy ordinances—the which that we may do it is unanimously voted and agreed to, that for the three ensuing years, all the public charge in building a meeting-house and minister’s house, and settling a minister and his maintainance shall be voted after this way :

“ One half of all the lands within the township as granted by a General court as now belonging to each inhabitant and proprietor of the township so granted, and the other half of public charge as aforesaid on head stocks and other ratable estate.”



I beg you to remember that this transaction bears date with the first meeting held with a view to their incorporation as a town. There and then they put on record, the sublime declaration of their faith in God, and voluntarily placed themselves under contribution to build a house wherein He might dwell—to bear the ark of covenant to the place of its rest, and to keep his name in everlasting remembrance.

By that act, which was in harmony with the successive events of their history, their religious character is established. Everything was made subordinate and tributary to the claims of their christian faith. In no case was it the incident, but always the central idea that shone forth with the brilliancy of the morning star, amid the mists and shadows of the early dawn.

It would be interesting to look upon a picture of Pomfret as it was 150 years ago. Its natural features have not largely changed. There was more of forest then than now, although many of these openings were never wooded. The signs of cultivation which greet us on every side, did not then appear. Nature was wild and unsubdued as in the lands toward the setting sun.

The Indian roamed over these hills—hunted in these forests and fished in these streams. The substantial and tasteful dwellings that dot the landscape—the homes of culture and sweet content, where our fathers of a hundred years have lived and died, date not back so far as the origin of this church. Only 40 families resided within the limits of the Mashmugget purchase. Not secure in their dwellings, they fled at night-fall to the four spacious fortresses erected at convenient points in the town, and which were defended from the prowling savage.

It is well for the children to remember that the establishment and maintainance of religious institutions

by our fathers 150 years ago, involved peril and sacrifice and determined effort, that we may adequately value the inheritance of their faith.

The nature and grandeur of this Inheritance of the fathers more manifestly appears when we consider :

## (II.)

### THE SPIRIT THAT CONTROLLED THEIR RELIGIOUS LIFE.

We may not look, in all things, for a correspondence between the remote past and the present.

Mighty changes are involved in a century of years. It was a truthful proverb of the old Romans—*tempora mutantur nos et mutamur in illis*. The character of civil government—of educational and religious institutions and the social customs of the people, induced by the rapid growth of the population, the development of natural resources and the increase of intelligence, are subject to this transforming influence.

Each age has its distinct types and characteristics. In the religious history of a nation or an age, this change will apply to the externals of faith and to the forms by which it is expressed : while the spirit that controls the action of the soul and the essential principles of faith, will remain the same. They are immutable and eternal. They are governed by no law of change. The life of religion in the earliest and remotest age is identical as the spirit of its Divine Author.

We should do injustice to the fathers whose deeds we commemorate, to doubt their sublime appreciation of christian truth and christian institutions. They gave to religion an early place in their public councils, they bowed to its claims in the enactment of local laws.

Before the first harvest was gathered from these broad and productive acres, they made a way through the forests to the church of a kindred communion, and



as soon as the growth of their little community and their enjoyment of the privileges of a township warranted the step, they with a glad and willing mind, laid upon this hill, within the shadows of their homes, the enduring foundations of the church, to be forever consecrated to the worship of the God of Israel, and which has remained a priceless memorial of their faith through the storms and changes of 150 years.

Pre-eminent in their religious life was the spirit of sacrifice. They appreciated the exalted worth of christianity and were willing to meet the cost of its maintainance.

Sacrifice was an inseparable element of their religion. It was involved in the minor duties of their faith.

Their church edifices were the slow growth of time. The craftsman's labor was slow and heavy. The architecture was rude, suggestive rather of durability than of beauty and comfort.

To rear a temple for the service of God in the early time involved the necessity of denial, with regard to the person and the household.

Money had a higher value then than now. He who was regarded rich in their day, would be poor in ours. What was esteemed extravagance by the fathers would now be called only generosity, if indeed it did not incur the charge of parsimony.

How vast the change!—In our day churches spring up, as if by magic—vast Cathedrals, with their grand and beautiful proportions, occupy the places, where but a few months before the eye was greeted only by the lawn or the vacant street. The forests fall and the granite mountain crumbles beneath the force of machinery. The skillful artificer enjoys the help of modern science, and what gave our fathers anxious thought, is now quickly determined, and as easily ex-

ecuted. The resources of the land have been successfully developed by the genius and intelligence of the age. Increase of population has been followed by a corresponding increase of demand for the productions of the farm and workshop, and so life and energy have been infused into every department of business. The world has grown rich. The resources of the christian community are vast almost beyond estimate. If now the time seems to demand a new church or one of larger proportions and more elaborate architecture, it can be built without suggesting the thought of sacrifice. The financial ability of the church is adequate to all judicious demands for enlargement. But when our fathers lived, sacrifice was a significant word, which they welcomed, even in its severest interpretation, for the sake of the holy objects which it contemplated.

It was a scene worthy of the limner's pencil, when our fathers met in anxious council May 3rd, 1713, and pledged themselves to tax their lands, their stock, and their ratable estate, for the building of a church on this hill, and the permanent maintainance of religious institutions! It is worthy of notice that the record is a cheerful one. They consented to this large expenditure for the truth's sake, with the same readiness and gladness of heart, that they determined measures for the material growth and prosperity of the township. The principle of sacrifice receives new lustre from the heroic deeds of our fathers, who came, 150 years ago, as the pioneers of a christian civilization to Pomfret.

The religious faith and worship of the fathers was marked by great simplicity. It was the simple belief of the soul without adornment. They placed a high regard upon the great essentials of religion, but did not seek to robe it in its most attractive dress. There was undeniably an element of servitude in their faith,



which has happily passed away, with the enlightening influences of time. Their mode of worship was rigidly plain and unaffected. A church that was securely constructed and that would shelter them from the beating storm was all they desired. They did not study personal comfort, as the old style pews, and the absence of stoves in mid-winter fully attest. They believed in the simple power of truth upon the heart.

This simplicity of faith was very beautiful in its time. Skepticism was an aftergrowth of the depraved nature. In the first pastorate of the church, the Saybrook Platform, as a rule of faith and government, was adopted by the harmonious action of the entire body. Dissentions in matters of faith have seldom disturbed the peace of the church from the beginning till now. At the coming in of the present century a storm of great bitterness swept over the church and it seemed as though she must bow beneath its violence. But God appeared and brought His enemies to reproach, and crowned the faith of the church with security and peace.

The calm that succeeded this tempest was like that described by Virgil: "The troubled surge falls down from the Rocks, the winds cease, the clouds vanish and the threatening waves subside."

It is not too late to enter the plea of justification, for the seeming austerity of the fathers in the enforcement of discipline.

But let us not deal so unjustly with their memories as to attribute it to the unkindness of their hearts, or to the absence of Christ like gentleness and charity. The church was the fortress of their strength and the hope of the future. It was enshrined in their hearts as the object of fondest affection and devotion. The noblest sentiment of their souls was enlisted in its defence. Let us attribute the act of excessive severity,



rather to their consciousness of the holy mission of the church—their obligation to maintain its faith inviolate, and the peril that was involved in deviation from strict integrity.

Our fathers were good men, and their integrity was equal to the strong tests of the age in which they lived. A crowning virtue which they illustrated and which shines on every page of their record, as the brightest gem of the royal coronet, was their just conception of the claims of Christ and his advancing kingdom. Let their spirit be judged from this elevation, and we shall find it not only easy to forgive the errors of life into which they unconsciously fell, and which are common to the race, but shall discern deeds of the truest nobility, worthy our admiration and grateful remembrance.

It remains only to consider :

### ( III. )

THE WORK WHICH THE FATHERS SUCCESSFULLY BEGAN  
AND TRANSMITTED TO THE CHURCH OF THE SUCCEEDING  
GENERATIONS.

It is the teaching of history that every age has its distinct and appropriate mission. To every generation of men is assigned a part of the sublime plan by which God is working out the highest good and happiness of the race.

It was given to our fathers to begin the labor of christian reform and evangelization—to subdue the wildness of nature and cause the wilderness to bud and blossom as the rose,—to lay deep and broad upon these hills, the foundations of christian institutions. When they came from their pleasant homes in Roxbury—from a christian community, and the faithful teach-

in of Eliot, they found no church to welcome them to her blessed communion and to throw around them the shield of her invincible protection. Pomfret was a wilderness, and the wilderness was the home of the savage.

It was given to the fathers to make the first beginnings—to plant the seed of the first harvest. The church—the civil government—the social fabric, were all future! History tells us how well the fathers executed their trust. Their faith and their labor remain as precious memorials to us, between whom and the fathers a century and a half of years has rolled. Thrice has the golden bridal of the church come and gone and yet with the beauty and vitality of her youth she welcomes her returning children to-day.

"Time rolls his ceaseless course; the race of yore,  
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,  
And told our marveling boyhood legends' store,  
How are they blotted from the things that be."

The fathers have been gathered to the generations of the dead. They have entered upon the glorious rest and reward of the righteous. They stand before the Eternal Throne with the congregation of the just. The work which they began with holy faith and fidelity, devolves upon us.

The church was not organized for a century; but for a specific purpose, whose attainment reaches from age to age, down to the latest-born of all the generations. The Great Head of the church commissioned the fathers to plant the germ of christian institutions here when nature was wild, and the men who lived upon these hills knew only nature for their teacher. He has commissioned the children to sustain the work of the fathers, and make the vine of their planting vigorous and fruitful, and to build upon the broad foundation which they laid a superstructure that shall survive the ages.



In her sympathies and affections this church is a part of the church universal. The faith she entertains and defends is held in common with a vast communion of christian confessors. The command of the Master is to evangelize the nations—to “prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

The hope of the church includes the universal prevalence of truth and righteousness—the certain approach of the time when the nations shall become the conquests of Christ, and the fruits of redemption. The responsibility of honoring this wide command of the Master is shared by all branches of the visible church. This is the general inheritance transmitted from one generation to another.

The fathers who planted this church 150 years ago, left us not only our appropriate part of this general inheritance, but one of a more local nature and bounded by narrower limits.

They found Pomfret a wilderness, inhabited by the savage. They subdued the forests and cultivated the fields by the arts of useful husbandry. They organized a society upon christian principles that represent the faith of the Apostles and their Teacher and Master, Christ.

The change between the Pomfret of 1715 and the Pomfret of 1865—the superiority of the civilization of this day to the barbarism of the red men of the forest, is directly attributable to the influence of a vital christianity. . Our local inheritance is circumscribed by the limits of Pomfret. Here we are to maintain the Gospel. Here we are to defend the faith of the fathers from the assault of the alien and the foe. Here we are to guard the heritage of the fathers from reproach and invasion.

Pomfret will be in the future, as in the past, an ag-



ricultural township. These farms should be owned by men of American birth—of American sympathies, and of the faith that glowed in the hearts of those holy men who planted the Gospel of Christ upon American shores! Let the young men of Pomfret apprehend the nobility of labor where their fathers lived and labored and died. Let them silence the appeals that greet them from the feverish channels of speculation; let them welcome to their hearts the simple faith of their fathers, and the streams of influence that shall go from this ancient church, will bear life and health and joy upon their waters and make glad the city of God.

Entertaining just views of the sacred obligations devolved upon us, let us at the beginning reiterate the cry of the Crusaders at the siege of Jerusalem, “Deus id vult,” “It is the will of God”—and prove that the inheritance of the fathers has not fallen to unworthy hands.

Could the roll of this ancient church and the larger roll of the congregation, who have worshipped in the meeting-house of the society be called—and the honored dead answer to their names, we should listen to illustrious voices. Names that have become historic are inseparably interlinked with the annals of this church.

Far back in Colonial times, *Jonathan Belcher*, afterward an illustrious Governor of Massachusetts colony, occupied a seat in the old meeting-house. The vote of the town granting him permission to build his pew at the right of the pulpit is upon the early records.

In this town John Hancock, governor of Massachusetts, and President of the Congress that issued the immortal Declaration of Independence, spent the summer months, and in this church he listened to the

faithful sermons of Aaron Putnam, with whom he sustained relations of warm personal friendship.

Here Israel Putnam, the historic name of Pomfret, who died within sight of this hill, had his home. His name is still upon the records of the old Library Association formed in connection with this society, in 1721-22.

It would be a grateful study to trace the history of the children of this church who have borne the lessons of truth received within her communion, into all the learned professions and almost every channel of business life.

It would pleasantly beguile the hour to speak of the illustrious names of Grosvenor, Sabin and Chandler borne by the first proprietors of Pomfret and with equal honor by their lineal descendants who are still with us.

It is the bidding of filial affection to gather these treasured recollections of the past, that the coming generations may understand their indebtedness to the parent church. But our honored Mother needs not this service at the hand of one so lately adopted into her family as myself; while another lives—upon whom many will look to-day with eyes made tearful by precious memories—as their spiritual father—and all, as a safe counselor and a faithful friend. The years since you have heard his voice in the ministrations of the sanctuary have told heavily upon him. His form is enfeebled by disease—his step is slow and his breath difficult, but his heart is warm as in his youth, and no one greets the returning children of the church with a truer or a heartier welcome than he.

To him we would say with united voice, as Horace said to Augustus,

Serus in caelum redeas, diuque,  
Laetus intersis populo.



Around us to-day are the spirits of the honored dead. The air is tremulous with their whispered voices. They take up the strains of earthly song and swell them to a grander and richer chorus.

Memory will be busy, recalling faces once familiar and friends once dear, but whose hearts are still. It will not seem invidious to make mention of one who would have graced our assembly and welcomed with a heart overfull of love, the returning children of the church. He was endowed with kingly qualities of mind and heart and his death was kingly.

The honored name of *Job Williams* will be often spoken to-day, and his memory enkindled afresh in many hearts. Shall we ever cease to mourn him?

One who had no faith in God and but little in man, said :

“The very cypress droops to death—  
Dark tree, still sad, when other's grief is fled;  
The only constant mourner o'er the dead.”

False and atheistical sentiment! Yet in the highest sense we do not mourn the sainted dead, for our hearts cannot and would not forget that,

“They rest from their labors and their works do follow them.”

Let not the memory of those whom we have lost—whose earthly re-unions are no more—who have passed beyond the sighing and the weeping—beyond the sinning and the dying—beyond the ever and the never—tinge with sadness these hours of holy festival. Their song is sweeter—their banquet richer, and their communion more blessed than ours.

Are not the fathers of 1715 and the children of 1865 members of one church, though a part have crossed the flood? Christ is its living Head, and around Him the successive generations will gather till the last redeemed child of the race has entered the Fathers House.



# PASTORS OF THE CHURCH.

---

BY REV. D. HUNT.

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The early inhabitants of Pomfret were persons who feared God and loved the institutions and ordinances of religion. They bore to the wilderness, here, the impressions which that holy and enterprising servant of Christ, John Eliot, their pastor, had made upon their hearts.

As soon as their number and circumstances would admit, they commenced exertions to have the stated ministry of the gospel and a sanctuary.

Having obtained, by grant of the General Assembly, May 14th, 1713, all the privileges of corporate towns, on the 28th of October of the same year, the town voted—"to give an orthodox minister, such an one as shall be acceptable to the people, £150 in money for and toward buying his land and building his house—also to break up four acres of land and plant two, with an orchard—and for his salary £55 in money for the first year, until such time as there shall be sixty families settled in the town, and then £70 a year ever after, so long as he shall continue his ministerial relation to us—and Ebenezer Sabin and Samuel Warner are chosen to go and bring a minister to preach and settle here. And it is voted in the first place that they shall make their application to Mr. Ebenezer Williams of Roxbury, and show him a copy of the votes respecting the settling of a minister here, and if he will accept of what is offered and come and be our minister, they shall seek no farther; but if he may not

be prevailed upon to come, then they shall make their address to such others as shall seem advisable."

At a subsequent meeting, viz, Nov. 19th, 1713, the following resolution was adopted,—“Whereas sometime since the town employed some persons to wait on Mr. Williams to come and preach among us, who being newly come off his journey, could not be prevailed to come, the town expressing their great value for the said Mr. Williams, desiring he may be further addressed by letter, to come and preach with us for the space of six months, which if it may be obtained, the town promises to pay him for that time such a salary as shall be honorable and to his satisfaction; hoping that at the end of said time we may have such experience of each other as that the providence of God may open a door for his settlement, and it is desired that Mr. Williams will please send his answer.”

At a meeting held three months after, viz, Feb. 16th, 1714, the following was passed,—“Whereas the inhabitants of this town at a public meeting sometime since, did agree to address Mr. Ebenezer Williams of Roxbury, to come and preach here for the space of six months, hoping at the end of that time to have such experience of each other as that the providence of God will open the door for his settlement, and the said Mr. Williams being accordingly applied unto, did in convenient time, viz, Dec. 23rd, 1713, come unto us, and has, as much as the providence of God would permit, continued to preach unto us ever since; and now although the said six months be not nearly expired, yet the people by the little experience they have had of Mr. Williams are very well satisfied with him, finding him to be a gentleman very agreeable to them, and every way willing to accept of him for their minister, and to let him know what encouragement they will give him to settle with them. Accordingly there-



fore, they do freely and faithfully promise and engage that if the said Mr. Williams doth like the town, and shall and will settle here in the work of the gospel ministry, they will give him £170 in money toward buying his land and building his house, and for his salary £60 yearly for four years, and after that to raise 20 shillings yearly until it shall come to £70, and then to stand at £70 per annum so long as he shall continue his ministerial labors among us.

And Mr. Williams being personally present for several weighty and serious considerations him thereunto moving, particularly for and in the consideration of what the town has offered him, doth freely, faithfully, and sincerely promise that he will settle in this town, in the work of the ministry, and by the grace of God enabling him, will endeavor to discharge aright all the duties belonging to his profession."

In June following, the proprietors of the town held a meeting in Roxbury, and for the further encouragement of Mr. Williams to settle here in the gospel ministry, voted to give him two hundred acres of land out of their undivided portion.

May 19th, 1715, the town voted that Dea. Sabin Lt. Chandler, Samuel Warner, Ensign Grosvenor, Abiel Lyon and Jonathan Hyde be a committee to treat with Mr. Williams about his ordination.

Sept. 14th, 1715, voted that the ordination of Mr. Williams be on the 26th day of October (or the last Wednesday.) Also voted that an ordination dinner be provided for forty persons, viz, ministers and messengers of the churches. Also that the aforesaid gentlemen be entertained as much as necessary before the ordination, at the town's charge. Voted, that Dea. Sabin, Samuel Warner, Edward Payson, Jonathan Hyde, Nathaniel Sessions and Eben Truesdale be a

committee to take care that a good dinner be provided and all things carried on in good order."

According to these arrangements this church was organized and Mr. Williams was ordained its first pastor, after having preached to the people nearly two years.

Rev. Ebenezer Williams was born at Roxbury, Mass., August 12th, 1690—was the son of Samuel and Deborah Scarborough Williams, and nephew of Rev. John Williams of Deerfield, famous for his captivity among the Indians. He graduated at Harvard College, 1709, where he was A. M. in course. His charge as pastor of this church he held until his death, which occurred suddenly, March 28th, 1753, in the sixty-third year of his age, and the thirty-eighth year of his ministry.

During his ministry both the churches, Brooklyn and Abington, were formed from members dismissed from this church, for that purpose.

Mr. Williams was held in high esteem, not only by his own people, but throughout the State. His assistance was often sought in councils and matters of ecclesiastical difficulty in various and remote places. He was fellow of Yale College from 1731 to 1748.

In a sermon preached on the occasion of his death, the Rev. Solomon Williams, D. D., of Lebanon, said: "He was a person of good natural and acquired abilities, great activity and application. Though he was not favored with the most happy elocution, yet he was a plain, faithful preacher of the great and important doctrines of Christ. In him this people were blessed with a wise, judicious, sound orthodox minister.

By a vote of this society the funeral charges of Mr. Williams were defrayed at its expense, and a monumental tablet was also placed over his grave.

Mr. Williams married Penelope, daughter of John



Chester, Jun., of Weathersfield, and had a son Chester who was pastor at Hadley, Mass., and a member of the Council that dismissed Jonathan Edwards from the church in Northhampton. He had a son Ebenezer who lived in this town, greatly beloved and confided in. He was Judge of the County Court, and of the Court of Probate,—often represented the town in the legislature—performed much military service—commanded at Fort Edwards in 1757, and was Colonel of a regiment of militia in the Revolution, which did service in the neighborhood of New York. The only daughter of Mr. Williams was Hannah, who married Gen. Zech. Huntington of Norwich. The widow of Mr. Williams died June 29th, 1764, aged 74 years.

Mr. Williams wrote a will in his last days, but dying suddenly it was not executed. His children, however, agreed to settle the estate under the will. And when the will and the doings of the court thereon were subsequently burned, they petitioned the legislature to confirm the settlement which they had made. This shows that Mr. Williams had, like Abraham, commanded his children and his household after him, and they rose up after his decease and called him blessed.

The *second* pastor of this church was Rev. Aaron Putnam. He was the son of Rev. Daniel Putnam of Reading, Mass.—was born Dec. 5th, 1733—graduated at Harvard College 1752, was A. M. in course, studied Theology with Rev. Dr. Hall of Sutton, Mass.

He was called to settle as pastor of this church, Nov. 17th, 1755, and gave his answer on the 8th of Feb. following in a sermon from Job 33: 6: “Behold I am according to thy wish in God’s stead, I also am formed out of the clay.”

On the 25th of Feb. a fast was observed with reference to his settlement. Two sermons were preached, and Mr. Putnam was examined by seven ministers as to his qualifications for the work of the ministry. His ordination took place on March 10th, 1756. Sermon by Rev. Samuel Mosely of Hampton.

Mr. Putnam proved an eminently useful and acceptable minister of Christ. Serious and godly in his deportment—careful to admonish transgressors and to maintain order in the house of God. He was an excellent scholar, particularly skilled, it is said, in the Greek language and literature which in his time was not so thoroughly studied as it is now. He fitted many young men for college, some of whom became eminent in their professions, such as Rev. Dr. Sumner of Shrewsbury, Rev. Dr. Josiah Dana of Ipswich and Rev. Nehemiah Williams of Brimfield, Mass., Hon. Elisha Williams of Hudson, N. Y., the celebrated Samuel Dexter of Boston, and the Hon. Wm. Prescott, (father of the historian). He had at one time seven young men in Yale College, all of whom it is believed became ministers of the gospel—[an example this for pastors of the present day]. Of Samuel Dexter, Mr. P. is remembered to have said, he was the best scholar he ever knew.

In the latter part of Mr. Putnam's ministry, his health failed, and finally his voice, so that he was unable to preach. During this period he wrote sermons, which were read on the Sabbath to the people. His watchfulness and fatherly care of the flock of which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer, were conspicuous in all this period. His written messages of love and faithfulness were passing daily to the families and individuals of the parish. So constantly was his grandson, who bore them, in the streets, that he received the appellation of "Mr. Putnam's post."



But the church suffered much from the want of a *speaking* preacher. Besides in the attempt to settle a colleague pastor they became divided. A part went off and settled under the ministry of Oliver Dodge—the rejected candidate—assuming the name of “The Reformed Catholic Church of Pomfret.”

This schism gave rise to a controversy in which the ministers and leading men of the county became involved. During its continuance, the “city of God” here, became as a widow in her weeds; “she wept sore in the night and her tears were upon her cheeks.” Those who adhered to Mr. Putnam—a feeble band—used to meet on the Sabbath, in the great and empty house, once thronged with people, to read the word of God and pray; and their faithful, but speechless pastor showed his approbation by his constant presence.

At length God heard their prayers. Dodge became a drunkard and an apostate. His followers, disgusted with him and sad for the trouble they had made, returned to the society and church which they had left, and happily united in the choice of Mr. King as colleague pastor. But when the council convened for Mr. King’s ordination, it was thought best that Mr. Putnam should be dismissed; which was accordingly done, May 5th, 1802. It was agreed, however, that the aged pastor should receive an annual allowance during his life.

Mr. Putnam survived his dismissal eleven years, and died Oct. 28th, 1813—in the eightieth year of his age. The sermon at his funeral was preached by Rev. Dr. Whitney of Brooklyn who was scribe of the council which ordained him 57 years before. He says, “Mr. Putnam afforded a remarkable example of patience and submission to the will of God; that he was favored with the free use of his reason, and even his speech was considerably restored in the last year

of his life. His last words were, "Take me hence ; I long to be gone that I may be free from sin."

As the ministry of Mr. Putnam extended through the whole period of the Revolution, it was desired to ascertain the character of his patriotism and influence in connection with that struggle,—but nothing definite has been found. Some ministers in those days made themselves conspicuous in the cause of liberty. They left their mark on their generation. As the people of Pomfret were remarkably earnest in the cause of freedom, and prompt to furnish men and means to resist oppression (some 18 of the citizens being killed and wounded at Bunker Hill and 70 men serving in the regular army during the war, besides considerable militia service)—there is little doubt their pastor was before hand with them and gave the sign. He could not have staid in the place if he had been indifferent. Moreover, the personal friendship of Gov. Hancock and other eminent patriots which he long enjoyed, indicates the same.

On the whole, while the ministry of Mr. Putnam maintained an average character with the ministry of the county for talents and learning, or even more than this, it would seem that its distinguishing trait, that which left its mark in history—for which he was most spoken of while living and of which there is the longest memory now that he is dead—was *goodness*. His goodness outshone all inferior qualities as the sun puts out the stars.

Mr. Putnam published a sermon (1798,) on the Being of God. In 1801, Discourses on Baptism, also, several other papers and tracts.

He married Oct. 30th, 1760, Rebecca, daughter of Rev. Dr. Hall of Sutton, Mass., by whom he had one son and four daughters. This lady was killed by a fall from a carriage, July 1773. He then married



Elizabeth, daughter of Rev. Ephraim Avery of Brooklyn, and had four daughters and one son, Aaron.

The family of Mr. P. were remarkably devout and holy persons. All traditions of them bring delightful evidence that they belonged to "that family of which God is the Father and Christ the first-born among many brethren." The son graduated at Brown University, 1811. After engaging in business a few years in Philadelphia, he became a minister of the gospel—in character much resembling his father. He died the pastor of a Presbyterian church in Cherry Valley, N. Y.

[For some of the statements in this sketch of Mr. Putnam the writer is indebted to Hon. David Hall of New York.]

The third pastor of this church, was the Rev. Asa King. He was born in Mansfield, 1769,—the son of John and Elizabeth King. His advantages for early education were limited. When about 18 years of age he became deeply interested in the subject of religion and united with the church in his native place. From this time he began to entertain a strong desire for an education and for the work of the ministry. Want of funds and also of health stood in his way—but he resolved, if possible, to obtain education sufficient to qualify him to be a preacher of the gospel. He spent two and a half years in an academy at Jamaica, L. I., and then entered Princeton College, where he continued one year and then left for want of funds and health. After teaching a few months at Easton, Pa., he came to New Haven and engaged as a teacher of a select school where he continued with high reputation for three and a half years. He left this school in the spring of 1801, and entered the Theological school of Rev. Dr. Backus of Somers. In the autumn of the same year he was licensed to preach the

gospel by the New Haven West. Association. He soon came to Pomfret, and was ordained pastor of this church, May 5th, 1802.

During his ministry this church was greatly blessed. Peace and harmony were established after the long controversy which had preceded. Precious seasons of revival were enjoyed. One of these seasons, which occurred in 1808, and which brought seventy persons into the church, was probably the most general and pervading of any revival that ever occurred in this parish. It was also the most radical and thorough in its work upon the individual subjects of it. It changed the character and habits of the place and laid the foundations of good for future generations. The fruits of that revival have never ceased to be manifest. They are the inheritance of the present day. Our late beloved Dea. Job Williams came into the church at that time.

In June, 1811, Mr. King was dismissed on account of his health and also on account of what seemed to him, an inadequate pecuniary support. But the people always regretted that they did not make the needful exertion to keep him.

He was soon re-settled in North Killingworth, where powerful revivals were enjoyed under his ministry and many were added to the Lord—100 being received into the church at one time. In 1832 his labors were there brought to a close in consequence of his firmness in opposing the use and sale of intoxicating drinks.

A few months only elapsed, and he was again settled over the church in Westminster in this county. There, after a ministry of almost seventeen years, he died Dec. 2d, 1849, nearly eighty years of age—greatly respected and beloved by the people of his charge, and by the whole circle of his acquaintance.



As a minister, Mr. King showed great fidelity to the cause of his Divine Master, and to precious souls. A deep spirit of piety seemed to pervade his whole conduct, and he was honored with great success in his work. The last months of his life were months of suffering—yet they were greatly blessed to him. He said, “he never saw his assurance so strong, nor his Saviour so precious.” “There was not a straw out of place in God’s government.”

Mr. King was twice married ; first, to Miss Eunice Howe of Mansfield, by whom he had one son and two daughters ; secondly, to Mrs. Crissa Judson, widow of Mr. Zwinglius Judson and daughter of Rev. Wm. Storrs of Westford.

[For several of the statements concerning Mr. King the writer of this sketch is indebted to Rev. R. C. Learned and Rev. F. Williams.]

The fourth pastor of this church was Rev. James Porter. He was born at Wenham, Mass., June 18th, 1785, the son of James and Hannah (Curtis) Porter ; but was removed with his parents in 1786, to Peterborough, N. H. He graduated at Williams College in 1810, and received the Master’s degree from Yale College in 1815.

After leaving college he taught awhile in Belfast, Me. He studied Theology with Rev. Alfred Johnson and was licensed to preach the gospel in May, 1812. He began to preach in Pomfret, Feb. 13th, 1814, and was ordained pastor of this church, Sept. 8th, of the same year. The sermon was preached by his pastor, Rev. Elijah Dunbar, of Peterborough, N. H.

This charge he held until April 23d, 1830, when in consequence of protracted bodily infirmity he was dismissed at his own request. Soon after this he removed to Ashford. In April, 1834, he removed to South Woodstock. In 1849, he again removed to Stafford,

where he died June 6th, 1856, aged seventy-one years.

Mr. Porter was a man of much solidity and strength of character. Though a feeble man oppressed with disease, he had great equanimity. He knew how to possess his soul in patience, and was wise to ask a question or give an answer. He did not speak unadvisedly with his lips. He knew how not to speak at all, and by his silence to teach and impress the whole parish. Hence his presence preserved the peace of the church, and also of the neighborhood. Said a man to the writer, who is not particularly religious or church going, "Mr. P. was a peace-maker."

Being moderate in his manner, strangers might think him dull and inefficient. But no man ever wrought out and set in order so many ways of doing good in this parish as Mr. Porter. He was in advance of his time in every good work. He established the first Sabbath School in this region. He began the first monthly concert for prayer—took a collection and paid into the Treasury of Foreign Missions the first money that was collected at a monthly concert in Connecticut. He set on foot and arranged plans for our various charitable contributions, which have continued as model schemes to the present time. He set himself against the prevailing intemperance of the place and was the first to put his hand to the work of temperance reform, calling to his aid one of the fathers of this church, Darius Matthewson, Esq., who told the writer that he, as President of the Windham Co. Temperance Society, had held a temperance meeting in every parish in the County, and in some parishes many such meetings.

Though a poor man—afflicted with protracted sickness in his person and in his family, Mr. Porter was surprisingly ready to give something to every object of christian benevolence. Thus he blessed himself



and taught the people how to be blessed by giving.

His preaching was attended with much spiritual power. During the period of his ministry several seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord were enjoyed, in each of which many valuable members were added to the church. Some of the most marked and impressive cases of conversion that have ever occurred here, were under his ministry.

But "the Lord weakened his strength by the way." There was great sorrow when he resigned and left the parish. But the Lord cared for him. Though destitute of health and of the necessary means of support, with great affliction at times in his family, he seemed never to want. When asked, "How much salary a minister needed to live?" He said he thought "he could live very well without any."

In all the places where he resided after leaving Pomfret, he was greatly beloved and confided in by the people, and his influence was great for the truth. The families on which he called felt the power of his goodness. His presence in the prayer-meeting was the comfort of the saints—in the Sabbath School it gave light and joy. His pastor said at his funeral, "The children of the Sabbath School loved him as they did their eyes."

His last sickness was short. But he glorified God by the same quiet submission and assurance that had marked all his christian life. When his pastor asked him what he should pray for, he said, "Pray that God may be glorified whether I live or die." So he passed away. Mr. Porter published a sermon preached at the funeral of Dea. Simon Cotton, and another preached at the funeral of Samuel H. Lyon at Abington.

He was twice married. First to Miss Eliza, daughter of Dea. Benjamin Nourse of Merrimac, N. H., by whom he had three daughters all of whom preceded

him to the grave. Secondly, to Miss Lucinda Grant, daughter of Dr. Minor Grant of Ashford.

Mr. Porter and all his family sleep together in the ancient burying-ground of Pomfret.

The fifth pastor of this church was Rev. Amzi Benedict. He was born at New Canaan, May 1791. The youngest son of Isaac and Jane (Raymond) Benedict. He graduated at Yale College, 1814, studied Theology at Andover, where he was distinguished as a scholar—was ordained with two others at Newbury, Sept. 24th, 1818, as missionary to the destitute parts of the country. After spending some years in this service and others in teaching he was installed pastor at Vernon, June 30th, 1824. Then again in Pomfret, Oct. 19th, 1831, and was dismissed from the pastorate of this church, July 15, 1834.

Mr. Benedict's ministry was short but attended with power from on High, especially during the first year. He came to this place as a reaper and gathered the harvest of a long and tearful sowing, then passed on. He remarked to his successor as he left, that he saw scarcely a person in the congregation, out of childhood, who did not express some hope of forgiveness. Seventy-seven persons were added to this church during his ministry, of two years and nine months.

After leaving this place he was settled as pastor some four years, at Manlius, N. Y., where there was a powerful revival of religion among the young people. Afterward he was Principal of a Female Seminary in New Haven. For nearly two years he supplied the the pulpit of Rev. Dr. Bond of Norwich. About 1854, he resided in Chelsea, Mass. In the spring of 1855, he took charge of a small society in Yorktown, Westchester Co., N. Y., where he labored with much satisfaction until he received an injury on the Railroad at Stamford, of which he died three



weeks after at the house of his son-in-law at Brooklyn L. I., Nov. 17th, 1856, at the age of sixty-five years.

His sufferings were great, but he experienced in full (says a friend) the supporting comforts of the religion he had so long professed and preached, and which he had adorned by an exemplary and devoted life. He was a diligent student—a faithful and earnest preacher, a watchful pastor.

He published several sermons in the *National Preacher*, and elsewhere, also, a work in 1850, entitled a “Biblical Trinity,” of which he was preparing a second edition at the time of his death.

Mr. B. married in 1825, Martha S., daughter of Gen. Solomon Cowles of Farmington; and had five children, of whom four survive him and reside in Brooklyn, N. Y.

[For parts of this sketch of Mr. B. see Rev. R. C. Learned on Windham Co. ministers in *Congregational Quarterly*.]

The sixth and seventh pastors of this church still survive and being present to-day, are known to you all. Their history cannot now be written. May it be, that when their work is done and they have passed to the unseen world, their record may be found with the Just.

# MEETING HOUSES.

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BY REV. D. HUNT.

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While the people of Pomfret were making arrangements to obtain and settle a minister of the gospel among them, they at the same time made arrangements to build a meeting-house.

Dec. 22d, 1713. After voting that Abiel Lyon, Leicester Grosvenor, and Philemon Chandler, be a committee to take care about a burying-place, it was also voted that there should be a meeting-house built with all convenient speed. Dea. Benjamin Sabin, Lieut. John Sabin and Philemon Chandler were chosen and appointed a committee in that behalf, and it was agreed that they should have ample power in all respects, as such committees usually have in other towns in such matters.

It is to be understood that Mr. Williams is now here and is preaching, as he has opportunity, probably in private houses.

Feb. 16th, 1714. Voted that the meeting-house should be set on White's Plain\* and such part of it as the Committee hereafter named shall determine, viz : Lieut. John Sabin, Dea. Sabin, Cornet Sawyer, Nathaniel Gary, Sergt. Leicester Grosvenor, Abiel Lyon, Nathaniel Sessions, Ebenezer Truesdell, and Joseph Chandler.

March 8th, 1714. Town added two more to the

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\*This was a little more than quarter of a mile South of this house, on the East side of the road.



committee and voted a rate of £300 to defray the charge of the meeting-house.

The house was raised on the 27th day of April, and covered during the summer.

In Aug. 27th, 1714, the town voted that there should be a rate of £350 instead £300 as before. Also voted that the meeting-house should be carried no farther at present than to have the floor laid, the pulpit set up, the doors made and hung, the windows finished, and the body of seats and the minister's pew made.

This house fronted toward the south, with the end to the road; had galleries on three sides—a large door at the South side in front, and nine windows—four on the lower story and five above—a smaller door at the west end, looking into the street. The body of the house was filled with seats, built by the town, fronting the pulpit. On the walls, pews were built by the several owners and occupants of them. The seats in the gallery were like those in the body of the house.

At the meeting last referred to, after directing about the pulpit and the minister's pew: It was also voted that Mr. Belcher should have liberty to build a pew in our meeting-house, next to the pulpit, at the West end of it. [This Jonathan Belcher, Esq., was the man who owned the tract of land in the East part of the town, lying between the Mashamoquet purchase and the Quinebaug River, and also that part of Brooklyn called Mortlake. He seems to have resided here for a time. He was subsequently the Royal Governor of Massachusetts from 1729 to 1740.]

After Gov. Belcher, it was voted that Capt. Chandler shall have liberty to build a pew at the north-west corner of our meeting-house. It was also considered that Capt. Sabin shall have liberty to build for himself a pew in some convenient place in the meeting-house.

Also that Lieut. Samuel Williams have the same

privilege. At the same meeting it was voted that the £350 shall be raised in three rates : One for the meeting-house ; one for Mr. Williams' settlement and one other for his salary.

Now we may suppose (in this autumn of 1714) the meeting-house is used for preaching purposes, though not entirely finished. Later in the season, viz : November 9th, 1714, voted with respect to labor that has been performed by the inhabitants about the meeting-house, as follows, viz : That a single hand shall have 2s. 6d. per day (42 cents) and subsist himself—that good teams shall have for ordinary work, 5s. 6d. a day (that is a man and a team)—and for going to Ashford 8s. per day, and as much for going to Stoddard's Cedar swamp. (This swamp was in the west part of Brooklyn, South of Jericho.) Insufficient teams, to have reasonable wages to be adjusted by the Committee. It was also voted that the men who rode to Hartford, (about the act of Incorporation of the Town) and to the "Bay," for Mr. Williams, should have 4s. per day.

The next spring, viz : May 9th, 1715, it was voted that the space in the meeting-house at the West end, between the stairs and door, be a place for boys to sit in, (i. e. at the right hand of the pulpit.) Also voted that Lieut. Chandler shall have liberty to build a pew for himself and family in our meeting-house, at the South side between the great door and the next window. Also, That Benj. Sitton shall have liberty to build a pew for himself and family, in the meeting-house, adjoining to the East of Lieut. Chandler. Also granted liberty to Messrs. James Danielson, senior and junior, to build a pew at the south side of the meeting house, to the west of the great door. Also, that Edward Payson shall have liberty to build a pew next to Mr. Danielson's, between that and the stairs; Provided they all finish them by the last of



September next, (i. e. in five months), and take in and cause all their families to sit there, if it may be with convenience. [I do not understand this *proviso* ; perhaps they were a sort of afternoon men who needed this kind of quickening.]

At the same meeting, May, 1715, it was voted that the committee for the meeting-house shall buy 2000 feet of boards, for and towards building the meeting-house.

During this summer of 1715, we suppose the house is, for the present, finished. In October, the church is organized, and the pastor is ordained. In May of the succeeding year, viz : May 30th, 1716, town voted a rate of £130, for and towards defraying charge of the meeting-house.

In December following, (3d day, 1716,) voted a committee for fencing in the meeting-house.

Also voted that Nathaniel Gary should have liberty to build a house in the highway for himself and family to sit in Sabbadays. At the same meeting voted that the meeting-house should be seated according to the rates they have paid,—having respect to age and dignity. Ensign Grosvenor, Dea. Philemon Chandler and Edward Payson, committee. (This was a task worthy of those who undertake to grade the different aristocracies that figure in Beacon Street or Fifth Avenue.)

Three years pass and the town vote, December 1719, to build a balcony for a bell, which Jonathan Belcher offers to bestow.

The next year (December 5th, 1720) the town vote liberty to any of the inhabitants to build stables for horses, near the meeting-house, on the North side of the same, i. e. in the rear of the house, behind the pulpit. Also granted liberty to Nathaniel Sessions,

and Ebenezer Grosvenor to build each of them a pew at the East end of the meeting-house.

March 10th, 1760, it was voted that the persons entitled to pew-spots should build each his pew by the 1st of October next.

Two years later (March 14th, 1722) the town voted that the second seat in the body of the meeting house, and the fore seat in the front gallery shall be judged and esteemed equal in dignity; and that the third seat of the body, and the fore seat of the side gallery shall be equal; the fourth seat in the body, and the second seat in the front gallery shall be equal; and that the governing rule in seating the meeting house shall be, the first three rates which are made in the town on the last years' list—having respect also to age and dignity.

The congregation increased, more seats are needed; so, June 19th, 1725, granted £5 to defray the expense of repairing and finishing the seats of the meeting house.

The growth continues, and April 20th, 1727, voted that the vacancies at the backside of the men's and women's side galleries shall be filled out as soon as may be, in the manner first determined by the town.

But many have a long way to come to meeting, the days are short, and it is cold; and December 4th, 1728, the town voted that from this time to the beginning of February, there shall be but one public service on the Sabbath, and it shall begin at eleven o'clock.

It should be remembered that at this date, (1728) all the inhabitants of the town of Pomfret, including Brooklyn and Abington, worshipped in this house.

The next year (1729) the inhabitants at the south part of the town (now Brooklyn) petitioned for liberty to set up religious worship by themselves; which was granted.

Ten years passed on. The congregation continued



to increase, and more room was needed. Accordingly, December 27th, 1739, it was voted by the Old or North Society of Pomfret, [for the business is no longer done town-wise, since Brooklyn has become a distinct Society,] “ That there should be some addition to the meeting house inside,—a seat built before the fore seat around the galleries,—two seats at the back side of the front gallery; that each seat in the front gallery shall be lengthened on the men’s side, and shortened on the women’s side, so far as that two men more may be accommodated in each seat, [men more plenty than women, it was a new country, and women did not come—different from these days]. Also voted that there shall be pews built over the men’s and women’s stairs, going up the galleries, [these were called swing pews, &c.] Another arrangement to be noticed, is—voted that the lower half of the hindmost seat in the side galleries shall be fitted for, and devoted to the negroes; that the boys seats below, shall be fitted for men to sit in.” A rate of one penny on the pound was granted, and a committee appointed to carry the above votes into effect.

These appear to be the last repairs and additions of any account that were made to this first meeting house in Pomfret, though it continued to be used as a place of worship some twenty years longer.

In regard to the appearance of this house, it is supposed that it was not elegant. Many of the materials for building were at that time difficult to obtain. There could have been but few framed houses in the place when this meeting house was erected; tradition says but *one* when Mr. Williams came, December, 1713, and that he boarded in that house, as the only one in which he could be accommodated. That house stood in the north-east part of the town, and belonged to the Sabin family.

Ten years more pass—the population of the town increases and spreads into the several borders. The distance to this place of worship becomes great for many of the people, and burdensome. There begins to be much inquiry and discussion in the Society, with reference to their better accommodation. Many meetings are held during the years 1748–9, to consider whether the Society would build a new house in the centre of the population, or whether they would build two houses, or whether the Society would divide and become two Societies. The result was, that the inhabitants of the west part of the town, petitioned to be set off, as a separate Society, and their petition was confirmed by the Legislature in 1749.

On the 28th of March, 1753, Mr. Williams died, greatly lamented.

The next year, viz : 1754, several meetings were held, to see if the Society would build a new house of worship. They also agreed to apply to the County court to appoint a committee to fix the site for said house. This committee fixed a stake near the present common.

In the winter of 1755–6, Mr. Putnam was settled.

Some persons not being satisfied with the report of the committee of the county court, in 1755, the Society petitioned the Legislature to appoint a committee for the purpose. Their petition was granted. Said committee fixed the place on this common.

The satisfaction was not complete, and propositions to call for another committee and also to divide the Society were made, but did not prevail. The Society, June 16th, 1760, voted to proceed and build the house and also to buy two acres of land on which to set the house. (They bought said land, which constitutes the present “common,” of Lieut. Zechariah Waldo.) Dea. Holbrook, Dea. Williams, Esq. Williams, Lieut.



Durkee and Mr. Ebenezer Grosvenor were chosen building committee. It was voted that the house should be 60 feet long, 48 feet wide, and 24 or 25 feet posts. Also voted to raise 6 pence on the pound, of the ratable estate, to defray the expenses. The house was raised Sept. 5th, 1760. Sept. 21st, 1760, it was voted that the meeting-house should be fronted west.

After the house was begun, and the frame raised, either from dissatisfaction on the part of some, or the want of funds, the work was suspended till December 4th, 1761, when the Society voted to raise money and go forward with the finishing of the house, and raised a tax of 9 pence on the pound, on the list. At the same meeting the Society voted to build 44 pews, viz: 26 by the walls, 12 behind the body seats, and 6 pews at the lowest end of the men and women's seats, (or in other words, the body seats.)

Also voted, that those 43 persons that are highest in the lists given for the years 1759–60–61, (except four-fold assessments) shall have the liberty of drawing 43 of the pews, they building each one his own pew, and finishing the wall of said house, adjoining to his pew, to the first girt; he that is highest in the list, to have the first choice, he that is next highest, the next choice, and so on, till they have done drawing; reserving room for one pew for the ministry in said Society, where the Rev. Mr. Aaron Putnam shall choose it.

March 10th, 1760, it was voted that the persons entitled to pew spots, should build each his pew by the 1st of October next.

April 26th, 1762, “voted that the new meeting-house should be colored on the outside of an orange color—the doors and bottom boards of a chocolate color—the windows, jets, corner boards and weather

boards, colored white." This must have been considered the highest style of finish, at that time,—for in 1767, five years later, the people of Thompson voted to color their new meeting-house "the same as Pomfret."

The same year, viz: Oct. 7th, 1762, voted to sell the old meeting-house, as soon as the Society shall meet in the new house. Also, to sell the training field by the old meeting-house. Also granted liberty to such persons as were disposed, to build sheds for horses on the East line of the Common, around the new meeting-house, within four rods of Rev. Mr. Aaron Putnam's house. [It seems to have been a characteristic of the ages to put these structures as near the minister's house as possible.] At another meeting voted the same liberty to build sheds on the North side of the Common.

The last public service in the First meeting-house was held on the 16th day of January, 1763. The first public service in the second or new meeting-house was held on Thursday, January 20th, 1763, when "Rev. Mr. Putnam preached a lecture sermon."

The next spring, viz: April 13th, 1763, it was voted to build ten pews in the side galleries next the walls, and that the proprietors build them, and draw for their choice of pew-spots, the same as was done on the lower floor. But it was then, as now, many persons neglected to provide for themselves and their families, a place in the house of God. Nine years passed and many of the persons had not built their pews in the gallery: wherefore, June 17th, 1772, the Society voted that if any should neglect or refuse to build their respective pews by the 1st day of October next, they should lose their privilege, and the Society Committee should proceed to build them.

Dec. 27th, 1773, it was voted to new color the meet-



ing house. Also to remove the division between the men and women's front gallery, adding to the men's said front about one eighth of the women's said front, until the division comes to, or over a pillar whose foot stands in the pew of Mr. Joshua Sabin. The next December 27th, 1774, the Society directed the standing Committee to make some farther alteration in the side galleries.

The next year, Jan. 24th, 1776, the Society voted to have weights affixed to the West door of the meeting-house, for the purpose of shutting it.

It should be understood that in the original structure of the house inside, there was a row of pews, as in the first house, around on the walls—that the body of the house on each side of the broad (or middle) aisle, was filled with seats (very much like these pews) facing the pulpit. But the square pew was thought to be more honorable, or in better taste; and families, as their ability allowed, aspired to a pew, as in England men aspire to the peerage; for to sit in a pew was to be a peer of the parish. Accordingly the demand for pews arose to such a height, that on the 29th day of Oct., 1790, the Society voted to sell four back seats on each side of the broad aisle, and also a part of the side aisles; and to move each of the front seats five inches forward, to make room for eight pews in the rear, of equal size and bigness; that these seats should be sold at public vendue, and that the purchasers be obliged to build their pews in a given time, to be fixed by the committee.

And now the trouble with Mr. Dodge comes on, which measures its slow length by the siege of Troy. We hear no more of repairs or changes in the meeting-house, until after the re-union and peace of the Society, which by the mercy of God was brought about in a most amicable and christian manner in 1798–9.

In the year 1800, the meeting house began to need repairs, and the Society voted that the committee make such necessary repairs as would preserve it from suffering at present. [See how a people weakened and wasted by contention, begins to grow again as soon as the war is over.] In December, 1800, voted to shingle the meeting house anew, and repair the sides of the same.

In 1802, Mr. King became pastor—great harmony prevailed—further changes and repairs were sought, also the pew mania continues.

February 16th, 1804, voted to take up the four back seats, for the purpose of building pews; also that the aisles at the north and south ends of said seats be taken for the same purpose; that the Society build the pews, in conformity to those adjoining, and rent them annually. But the house was high and vast; Mr. King complained that it injured him to speak in it. The Society proposed to remedy this by putting in an additional sounding board, which they did in 1806, suspending it under the original canopy.

December 22nd, 1807, the Society voted to repair the gable ends of the meeting house, shingle the west side of the roof, and make other necessary repairs, and to raise \$120 for the purpose.

And now the Society being prosperous, they aspire to something more lofty.

In December, 1808, voted to appoint a committee to estimate the expense of building a tower, or steeple, and making a porch or porches, painting the house, and grading the ground around it, so as to make it more easy of access. Freeman James, Lieut. Grosvenor, Samuel White, Peregrine Gilbert and Silas W. Clark, were this committee.

The preliminaries of estimate and plans, being gone through, the Society are ready to proceed; and May



2nd, 1809, appointed a building and repairing committee of seven persons, to proceed and finish the work by the 1st of December, 1810. This committee were Benjamin Duick, Doct. Hubbard, Peter Chandler, Peregrine Gilbert, Ebenezer Fitch, Sylvanus Backus and Payson Grosvenor.

When the repairs and additions were finished, a bell was placed in the tower, by the generosity of Benjamin Duick, Esq., who being clerk of the Society at the time, was too modest to make any record of the deed. This bell being fractured in 1819, Darius Mathewson, Esq. was appointed agent to get it recast and hung anew in the tower. This was the bell which a few years since (1856) was taken down from the tower of this house, and replaced by the one which we now hear.

The expenses of these additions and repairs—about \$2500—were said to be greater than those of the original building; and by some infelicities of arrangement, became burdensome to the parish. A melancholy casualty also occurred when raising the tower, by which one man lost his life, and which created a panic among the men, that for a time threatened to prevent its erection altogether.

We hear no more of repairs or changes in this second meeting house, until, in 1826–7, discussion and inquiries began to arise, which terminated in 1832, in taking it down, and building the house which we now occupy. The builder of this house was Thomas Stedman, of Hampton. Those who saw and remember it well, say it was a noble structure. It was high and spacious, and abundantly lighted; it had galleries on three sides, and could seat a thousand or twelve hundred people; and these seats, it is said, until the latter part of Mr. Putnam's ministry, were fully occupied from Sabbath to Sabbath. The pulpit was high, with

a window behind it, and a canopy or sounding board over the head of the speaker; it was ascended by stairs upon one side only. The pulpit, the canopy, the breast work around the galleries, also the posts of the house, were painted blue. The house looked to the west. Its lofty tower arose at the south end, a porch stood at the north end. Its appearance was impressive—grand. Many who approached it or saw it from afar, felt a measure of the awe which is inspired by the thought of the High and Lofty One, who inhabited, and so often showed His glory in it.

You see here a picture of this ancient sanctuary, drawn by Dea. Mathewson, from memory, after the lapse of 33 years.

As the Palacontologists, Cuvier and Owen, by their knowledge of Comparative Anatomy, were able from a thigh bone, or a molar tooth, or an incisor, to reproduce the Dodo, the Mylodon, the Dinotherium, and other extinct animals of the Pre-Adamite world, so Dea. Mathewson, from his distinct recollections of certain parts of the ancient structure, has been able to figure the whole for our admiration to-day.

The house in which we are assembled was built in the summer and autumn of 1832. It was constructed largely of the materials contained in the old house.

Col. Zephaniah Williams, Harvey Holmes and George B. Mathewson were the building committee, and Lemuel Holmes of Pomfret was the builder.

As the history of its origin and the repairs and changes which have been made upon it are familiar to most who are present, nothing need be said thereon.



## SABBADAY HOUSES.

I have been desired to say something about these ; many may wish to know what they were.

They were small rooms built near the meeting house by single families, and sometime two or three families jointly, who resided at a distance, for their comfort on the Sabbath in cold weather. They were made tight and warm ; had a fire place in one corner, benches and sometimes chairs for seats. Here the parents and their children came sufficiently early on the wintry Sabbaths, to build a fire and warm themselves, before the time of service. At intermission they repaired to this house, and warmed again, and took their lunch, preparatory to the afternoon worship ; this being over, in severe weather, they returned to this house, warmed again, and prepared for their journey home. These were called *Sabbaday* houses. There was at least one such near the first meeting house in this place—as we remember—Nathaniel Gary (who lived in the east part of the town) had liberty granted to build a house in the highway, “for himself and family to sit in Sabbadays.

I also remember to have seen in connection with one of the ancient country churches, in this state, two such houses. It was after stoves had been introduced into the meeting house, and they were in a dilapidated condition ; but enough of them remained to show what they had been. They were set at the ends of the rows of sheds, which stood near the place of worship.

These Sabbaday houses are said to have been frequent in country towns, all over New England in early times, and did not entirely cease until the warming of the house of worship became universal.

## STEPS OF PROGRESS.

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1715 TO 1865.

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BY REV. D. HUNT.

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“To the upright, there ariseth light in darkness.”  
“The meek will He guide in judgment, the meek will He teach His way.”

A review of the history of this particular church shows the presence of God in her midst, and the divine processes by which the Kingdom of Christ has advanced from one degree of order and of grace to another.

The commencement of this church one hundred and fifty years ago to-day, was eminently peaceful and orderly. The people of the parish were intelligent and orderly people. They endeavored to shape things according to the most improved methods of the time. Some of their plans were intrinsically good, and needed only to be carefully followed to produce the best results from generation to generation ; others involved the leaven of ignorance and misjudgment, the mistakes and errors of the times and needed to be changed for such as were more scriptural and safe. And because God was in their midst, and was their God, He showed His goodness by enlightenning their darkness from time to time, changing their apprehension of things that might be improved, and leading them to make alterations which from their benign working, proved that they were from God.

I. One mistake which this church made in her early history, in common with the churches of New England



generally, *was in the qualifications for communion*. While they held that the church should be composed of such as make a credible profession of faith and holiness, they also allowed all persons of good moral character to join the church and have fellowship in christian ordinances. This plan of communion was called the "Stoddard plan," because it was adopted and advocated by Rev. Solomon Stoddard, of Northampton, Massachusetts. It was held and taught by him, and after him generally in New England, until the days of Jonathan Edwards, "that a credible profession of Godliness is not necessary to full communion in the church. Persons need not profess a saving faith if they are orderly in life and morally sincere." Said the Windham Association, in a printed letter to the church: "It is the will of Christ that all who make an outward credible profession of Christianity should be admitted into the church, though unconverted, that they may be under the proper ordinances for their conversion." This opened the door of the church to all who were disposed to enter, provided they were decent in thier morals. Accordingly, most men and women after they had arrived to the family state and were free from scandal in their lives, joined the church, and had their children baptized.

The churches also adopted the practice of admitting persons who desired it, to "own a covenant" and become *half-way* members, that their children might be baptized, without professing any gracious sincerity, or coming to the communion. This practice continued in this church through the first two pastorates, and died out only, with that change in the sentiment of the churches which was produced by the discussions which arose in connection with the dismissal of Jonathan Edwards from the church in Northampton.

The result was that while there was the leaven of

true piety in the church, there was a great deal of dead orthodoxy and formalism "of wood, hay, stubble," which had to be burned out by a long season of trials and fiery jugments from the great Head of the church.

Through all these years there could be no discipline in the church, except for such sins as were generally condemned. Dishonesty, fraud, licentiousness and Sabbath breaking could be rebuked, because the prevailing sentiment was against them, and the records of the church show prompt and decided action upon such cases. But intemperance was not proceeded against, could not be, because it was common, and the public sentiment was in favor of the daily use of intoxicating drinks. Sometimes they would have in this parish four or five taverns (where we now have none) and as many stores where liquor was sold and drunk, and officers of the church would drink and be drunken. Yet the records do not show that any notice was ever taken of it by the church. It was not until the evil culminated in an attempt to settle an intemperate man for a pastor that the tide began to turn in favor of temperance and sobriety of life. The unconverted men in the church used to keep up the forms of religion. Some of them were Pharisaically exact. But tradition says they often attempted to pray in their families in a state of intoxication.

With the passing away of the second pastorate and the coming of the revivals at the opening of the present century, the practice of unrestricted membership, and the "half way covenant" passed away, we trust, forever. Upon the settlement of Mr. King, the Lord revived His work with power. There was a great turning to God here, in heart and life. Since which time, none have asked to be received to the communion of the church, who did not profess to think they had been born again.



II. The first two pastors of this church were Godly men. Their piety would not suffer by comparison with any in the ministry, in their day, yet they sinned the sin of the ages—the sin which caused the “irrepressible conflict” in our land, and brought upon us the woes of the late rebellion. Both of them were owners of slaves, and had slaves born in their houses. So did many members of this church. Probably the number of slaveholders in this parish was as great at one time, in proportion to the population, as it has ever been in the Southern States. It was thought to be right and according to the Word of God, to hold slaves, and they bequeathed them like their cattle, to their children. But this evil found an end.

III. Another step of progress was *the introduction of Prayer and Conference meetings, and School-house preaching*. We cannot say how much visiting from house to house, and catechetical instruction there was during the first two pastorates; but preaching and public assemblies were limited to two services on the Sabbath, (in cold weather frequently to one,) the “preparatory lecture,” and an occasional lecture in the house of some aged person or invalid. None but the pastor took part in acts of social worship. Laymen never prayed or spoke on religious themes in public. No place or time was given them. It was looked upon by the age as disorderly. Any brother inclined to such service, was regarded as a “new-light,” and a “separatist.”

But at the opening of the third pastorate under Mr. King, prayer and conference meetings were introduced. Many of the the elderly people trembled for the result. They feared it would bring in confusion which never could be reduced to order. Though some of the more considerate said: “Mr. King is a sensible and orderly man, let him try it, we are not fearful.”

Thus came into this church the institution of the prayer meeting and the religious conference, the benefits of which, under proper guidance, have been great in promoting religious conviction and growth in grace. Who can tell how many souls have been saved, by hearing others speak of God's work in their hearts.

IV. The institution of the SABBATH SCHOOL may be mentioned as one of the steps of progress in the history of this church. There is something very beautiful in the picture of a christian family of olden time, its sobriety and order, its Sabbath keeping, its family reading of the scriptures, and prayer, its catechetical instruction, its respect for the Christian ministry and the house of God, where both the young and the old prepared for their home in the heavens and where glimpses of the heavenly glory were first obtained. [May those bright examples of family religion, and of heaven in the household, never be diminished because christian parents rely too much on other agencies to do their work.] But all families are not christian, and all children are not thus trained. To remedy this condition of neglect and heathenism, the Sabbath school was devised. Great has been the success which God has vouchsafed to give it. It has gathered the wandering and outcast children. It has carried the light of the gospel into many of the abodes of darkness and sin. The system of Sabbath schools has developed itself into a grand scheme of evangelization, which both the church and the world recognize as having the approbation of God.

The history of this Sabbath school, both in its origin and its progress, presents facts of the deepest interest to the cause of Christ and of immortal souls. Time will not allow us now, even to count the shining characters which have gone from it to various parts of the world, and to the better land.



V. In connection with the Sabbath school, may be mentioned, a *partial acceptance of the theory, that a proper application of the Gospel will result in the conversion of little children.* Formerly it seemed to be held that children did not know enough to become Christians, that the converting power of the gospel could hardly be expected to reach them. They must grow to a measure of maturity before the church could hope enough to pray for them except as an event in the future. The word of Christ was ignored: "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of God." "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." But the revivals of the last half century, and the influence of Sabbath schools have changed this feeling, somewhat. There has been a progress in the right way, though it has not reached the end by a large space. I do not find that any children ever became members of the church until the ministry of Mr. Porter. One young woman was received into the church at the age of 16 years, by Mr. Putnam. Two young men, less than 20 years, joined the church under Mr. King; but in Mr. Porter's ministry some who were but 11 years of age were admitted, and became shining lights in the church, since which time it has been felt, in some degree, that the conversion of children is practicable and should be prayed for; also, that the admission of very young persons into the church is safe, when they give evidence of piety. Why not? Was not Samuel a prophet of the Lord when a child? and David a composer of Psalms for Zion when a mere lad? Did not the beloved Timothy receive the truth in his childhood? and may not any child under the gospel do the same? Must he wait till his heart is hard, and his mind is blind, and his

habits of sin confirmed, before he is a proper subject of grace, or God can be glorified in his conversion?

VI. Another step in advance of the past, was: *warming the house of God in the time of service in cold weather.* The first churches were built in a sub-tropical climate. No fire was needed; consequently no provision was made for any. But as the gospel prevailed and extended its influence into the North-temperate and the Frigid zones, and fire became a necessity to comfort and to health, in the place of worship, the regard to precedent was so inexorable that no allowance was made for change of climate and consequently no provision for warming the house of God. Our fathers came to this country under the control of that precedent, though they came to be free. They made no provision for warming their meeting-houses. Did not feel at liberty to do it against the practice of Christendom. They placed them in bleak, open fields, generally on high ground; exposed to all the winds that blow, with no building near, not even a tree or a shrub, behind which an Indian could hide. Nothing but the whipping-post and the pillory could be seen, which generally stood in the rear of the building, behind the pulpit.

To these cold places, the people came through the long cold winters on horse-back (such as could not walk) and aching with cold, performed their morning service. Then such as did not go to their homes during the intermission, went into the neighboring houses, where a large open fire was expected to be prepared for them. Here they talked sometimes devoutly, of the sermon and heavenly things; but often, quite too much, of politics and marketing, and did the gossip of the parish; drinking more or less cider. This was the Sunday School of those times, answering much to the "horse-shed class" of the present day.



The intermission being closed, they repaired to the sanctuary for the afternoon service. After waiting painfully, hands and feet growing numb with cold, for the finally and lastly of the sermon and the benediction, they hastened to their homes.

At length, say about 1820 to 1825, in this part of the country, deliverance from this bondage of the ages came. And many a benumbed and half-frozen worshipper could say, blessed be the men who first had the courage and the skill to put a stove into the meeting-house. For be it known, this favor was not obtained without opposition. Though a God-send to the children and youth; for now they could go to meeting with pleasure in the winter and could have a Sabbath School all the year round, which before, was limited to the summer months—many in advanced life did not wish for a change. They said, is it not a primitive custom to worship God in his house without a fire? Have not all the centuries done it? Moreover, it is an indulgence altogether unfavorable to earnest devotion, and that self-denial which every christian should cultivate—a decline from primitive example, which indicates approaching apostacy. Many insisted that ministers should preach with freezing fingers, and that parents of new-born children should bring them for baptism to these cold houses in the dead of winter, as appropriate tests of their faith and consecration. Who will now say, that in this respect the former days were better than these? We can worship God in an Arctic frost if we must. May we not worship Him in a softened air if we can?

VII. *Holding the communion in the place of the afternoon service.* When the writer was a child, and as far as he is informed, through the entire history of these churches, it was the custom to have the communion during the intermission. The morning congre-

gation was dismissed. The church gathered solitarily in the pews around the table, and received for the most part, unobserved by any from without, the memorials of a Saviour's love. There was beauty in the scene—a church alone with their Lord, as when the disciples were with Him at the first, in that upper room. But it would seem that this ordinance was designed to teach and impress the world, as well as to comfort and strengthen the church. “As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he comes.” If more than other, the communion service impresses and melts the believer; will it not also affect the sinner. It is silent preaching, but it is powerful. From the sacred memorials a voice proceeds, “Look unto me and be saved.” “*See how I have loved you.*”

This view of the subject at length obtained, and the communion was put in the place of the afternoon worship. Readily, the congregation fell in with the plan, accepting it as an excellent way. At the first it was feared that many who were not communicants would leave the assembly. It was said to the pastor, you must preach in connection with the communion service, as on other days, or the people will not be there. The result has proved all these fears to be groundless. Our congregation is as large at the time of the communion service, as on other days, and usually, as we might expect, is more subdued and tender in its appearance.

Is not this a plain advance in the right way upon the practice of the fathers? Said an aged minister who spent a communion Sabbath with us a few years since, (who had been accustomed to the old way, only) “I never saw the like, How beautiful. I shall go home and tell our pastor what I have seen.”



VIII. Another step, was making the support of the gospel entirely voluntary.

Our fathers sought entire religious freedom. They left the Fatherland, that they might worship God according to their own mind. Their end was good. They were honest in seeking it. But how to find what they wanted did not at first so readily appear. But the great Head of the church led them gradually to the light.

At the beginning of our history, the people were all of one faith and one order. As religion was the basis of all their institutions, all the people were expected to sustain the gospel ministry. So close was the union of church and state that the magistrates were required to belong to the church.

This rule soon proved to be too severe. In 1708 its rigor was abated in Connecticut, when all sober dissentions were so far released from the established system, as not to be punished for not attending its worship, though not from *taxation* for its support.

In 1727 to 1729, farther relaxation was granted to Episcopalians, Baptists and Quakers. But Congregationalists had no exemption. If they called themselves Congregationalists or Presbyterians and did not join some dissenting church, they were compelled to pay taxes to support the standing order.

This continued till 1784. During which period all those experiences of bigotry, and bad legislation were had, which attended and followed the great revival of 1740—such as the foundation of “separate” churches, banishing and imprisoning ministers who came into the colony to preach, or went out of their own parish to preach—fining such persons as went to hear any but their own pastor.

But the spirit of the Revolution wrought in the church as well as in the state. Accordingly in 1784,

all the people were made free to worship with whatever church they pleased; but must still be taxed for the support of the church of their choice.

In 1818, on the adoption of our State constitution, all restriction was removed in Connecticut. All churches and systems of religion were put upon their own merits—left entirely to the voluntary support of their friends. Many of the standing order, at that time feared greatly. They prayed and strove against the measure. Dr. Lyman Beecher, then in his strength, preached and printed a sermon to show that to leave religion entirely to voluntary support would be to open the flood-gates of ruin on the State. But no ruin came. On the contrary, there was a greater interest in religion among its friends, and greater activity to extend its influence through the community. This state of things has continued, and no class of christians can now be found, who desire to return to the old ways. Thus the end which our fathers longed for and suffered, but could not fully obtain, has been reached—entire *religious* as well as civil freedom.

The great problem on which their minds labored, the problem of the centuries, has been wrought out. Now we know what to do with men of every religion and of no religion at all. We have a place for the Pope under the laws of Connecticut. And should the Vatican and Lambeth both, be transferred to Pomfret, and this church should remain true to her principles, they would do us no harm.

It was designed, if there were time, to say something of the improvement which a century and a half has produced in church building, and in the manners of seating the house of God. Something of the rise and progress of the Temperance Reformation in this place and the manner in which this church has been affected by the doctrine of total abstinence in its order and dis-



cipline. Also of the rise and progress of Benevolent enterprises, and of those streams of charity which have gone forth to refresh the dry places in our own land, and in the world.

But this thought arises. Perhaps some curious spectator of these scenes may wish to ask, "Why do you recount with so much interest these steps of progress? or why do you commemorate the birth-day of a history which reads you from those large meeting-houses in which your fathers worshiped, into a house like this where we are assembled, and from those large congregations of one thousand or twelve hundred persons every Sabbath to the one hundred and fifty, or two hundred who worship here at the present time; while the population of the parish is not diminished, and the wealth and social prosperity are greatly increased. Do call you this progress? a growth? a success? We do. Just as we call it a progress in the life of Jesus from the time that "His fame went through all Syria," or from the hour He rode into Jerusalem amid the plaudits of the multitude, through His subsequent abasement until he expired on the cross, deserted even by His own disciples. There is no christian but calls that a progress in the history of his Lord—a triumph. In those days—in that transition from light to darkness, He achieved the world's redemption and swallowed up death in victory.

The beginning of this church was in great peace and in increasing numbers, for a long time. But the last seventy years have been passed amid struggle and waste—many of them in the "straitness of siege wherewith our enemies have distressed us in all our gates." We have been hewn by sects, wasted by the emigration of our sons and daughters whose places have been filled with aliens—a broad section of our people have been absorbed into the growth and enter-

prise of the Valley. Many of the old homesteads of the pious fathers have become the possessions of persons who wish us no good—while from causes which reflecting men well understand, a portion of the once Puritan population has relapsed into a state of opposition to the Truth and to moral culture, which as it is voluntary and determined, resists all approaches of christian influence on society.

Yet in all these changes God has not forgotten His church or left His Truth without a witness to its power. The practical fruits of the ministry in the last third of our history have been the greatest. More persons have professed conversion and the purpose of a holy life in the last fifty than in the first hundred years. Though the church has not grown in numbers, more have been added from time to time than in all her previous history.

We claim then, the right, the privilege to commemorate, not a bare continuance in life only, but a certain, a substantial growth.

Friends and brethren of this ancient church—sons and daughters of Pomfret, the evidence is complete: This is God's church. He planted it, and through light and shade has fed it from the hidden spring of life. Often have His people deserted Him, but He has not forsaken them. Here His long suffering has been shown—His gracious hand has wrought. Through all these years his redeemed and sanctified ones, have been going from this earthly service to swell the strains of the everlasting song.

May the evidence of progress which we recount and celebrate to-day, continue to advance, and like the waters which Ezekiel saw flowing from under the Temple, widen and deepen, bearing verdure, beauty and life—Eternal life, into all the world.



## REV. MR. DUNNING'S ADDRESS.

A beautiful story is told of the shepherds of the Alps.

In their perilous adventures among the mountains, they always take with them the Alpine horn. The solitary shepherd, having escaped the perils of the day, and feeling that God's arm alone could have kept him from harm, stands at the opening of his temporary hut, or resting-place for the night, high up the rugged cliff. Just as the last rays of the setting sun are gilding the mountain-tops, he sounds his Alpine horn, shouting loud and clear in the elastic air, "Praised be the Lord !" The sublime strain is immediately caught up by another on some neighboring peak, then by others adown the slopes, and by others still far beneath in the valleys, "Praised be the Lord !" "Praised be the Lord !" The very rocks catch the inspiration and find echoing voices. The echoes and re-echoes from cliff and cavern "roll the rapturous Hosanna round," till hill and vale become vocal with the resounding praise. The holy anthem is prolonged and shouted far ; then sinks and dies, as the darkness of night settles down upon the hills.

It is a sublimity to the ear as grand as is the Alpine scenery to the eye.

But all these sublimities of sight and sound are far surpassed by the moral grandeur of these mountains of God where these under-shepherds lead the flocks of Christ.

And as we stand here to-day on the summits of a hundred and fifty years, in the name of this beloved flock which by God's grace has escaped the perils of

the mountains and the perils of the world, we would utter the memory of His great goodness, and raise the grateful shout—" Praised be the Lord!" to the Chief Shepherd, who hath kept it in safety, and hath fed it with the finest of the wheat.

Nor this alone. From the nearest church on the North comes, on the sharp autumnal air, the shout, " Praised be the Lord who hath kept us by his power through the dangers of a hundred and seventy-five years!" She is the mother of us all. Across the valley on the nearest hill-top towards the sun-rising, this same song of praise for a hundred and fifty years of God's preserving love was sung by the flock there this day last week. Within the County there are seven of these venerable sister churches of a hundred and fifty years and more; and nine others which can look back over more than a century. Since the planting of the First, in South Woodstock, in 1690, till now, there has been organized in the County, on an average, one new church in every six and a quarter years.

These churches, having earnestly contended for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints, and holding the Head, and growing up into Him who is the Head, even Christ,—these christian churches are the golden candlesticks, the burning lamps of God, which have shined as lights in these regions, and which have sent their moral radiance into regions beyond. Many dark places, many dark hearts have been thus illumined.

Rays of light cannot be grasped in human hands and measured. Rays of moral light, bright and blessed as they are, cannot be even seen by mortal eyes, except indirectly, in their effects. Moral influences cannot be weighed in human scales, or appraised in earthly currency. But when the Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, when it shall be seen,



as then it will, that this man and that man, this saint and that saint in glory, were born here ; when it shall be seen that the floods of ungodly men in these communities, the workings and the outworkings of depraved hearts, were resisted and held in check, and beaten back by these churches, in many a gracious instance, to the casting down of imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ ; when it shall be seen that by the agency of these churches the moral tone of family and society was kept so high and so healthful ; when it shall be seen that these churches were co-workers with others of like precious faith in gathering the harvests of the world into the garners of Christ—then, I doubt not, these golden candlesticks will be placed in the eternal Temple, to burn forever before the glorious Throne. These churches of God which He hath purchased with His own blood, and which have held fast the faith and patience of the saints, having obtained a good report through faith, shall be in everlasting remembrance. It is impossible to overestimate the moral power of the church of Christ. Her mission in a world of sin, and want, and hope, is the noblest and the best. She is the salt of the earth, the real conservative agency amid the corrupting ambitions of man, and the destructive tendencies of sin. She is the light of the world, where all else is moral darkness, settling down into rayless and endless night. The communion of saints in the christian church is the true brotherhood of man. The unity of the Spirit abiding in the church is the bond of peace which one day is to bind the now hostile nations into one great family of love. And—

“Thus shall all shackles fall; the stormy clangor  
Of wild war-music o’er the earth shall cease;  
Love shall tread out the baleful fires of anger,  
And in its ashes plant the trees of peace.”

The church of Christ is to be the joy of the whole earth, and the wonder of all Heaven. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known *by the church* the manifold wisdom of God.

Nor need we be discouraged because the Lord does not at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel. The time is not yet; but the time shall come when the Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole Heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. More rapidly than ever before, perhaps, the church is moving on and rising up to her true station of usefulness and glory. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God! We are drawing near, it is believed, to those promised times of spiritual power, when nations are to be born in a day, and when the Lord is to add to the church daily, such as shall be saved. The Highest Himself, shall establish her. When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory. And it is alike ungenerous and unreasonable for skepticism to complain of the tardiness of the church, and that the day of her triumph yet lingers; for six thousand years, science, and philosophy, and politics, and the arts, and language, and agriculture, and the daily and necessary economies of life have been agitated and wrought upon by countless gifted intellects;—and which of them all has been made perfect? There are strong bars of iron yet in the ore bed; there are forms of beauty yet in the unquarried marble; uncounted gold is yet locked up in the thick-ribbed hills.

“Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear.”

Full many a star pours its radiance along the yet unsearched immensities of Heaven. There are treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which the human intellect



has not yet explored. And in the resources of an infinite God there are blessings, richer than any yet received since the great Ascension gift, which are to be poured upon the church, and which the church as the almoner of Heaven is to pour upon the world.

The church of Christ is the hope of a sin-ruined world. And here to-day, for ourselves and for our race, let us thank God with all our hearts for the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. Encouraged by God's care and guidance in the past, let us have hope for the future. Let us have perfect confidence that the church shall yet gain the peaceful triumph of the world, because the Prince of Peace is her victorious Leader, and is to be to the end. And let the song of every heart be—let it rise and swell in warmer and more gushing melodies than ever before,—

“ I love Thy kingdom, Lord,  
The house of Thine abode,  
The church our blest Redeemer saved  
With His own precious blood.

“ I love Thy church, O God;  
Her walls before Thee stand,  
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,  
And graven on Thy hand.

“ Sure as Thy truth shall last,  
To Zion shall be given,  
The brightest glories earth can yield,  
And brighter bliss of Heaven.”

## REV. MR. GROSVENOR'S ADDRESS.

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PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS.

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In my childhood Pomfret was the centre of business for the surrounding region, and, next to Windham, the most important town in the County. It was the thoroughfare of travel, between New York and Boston; and was enlivened by the daily line of stages from Hartford to Boston and Providence, and from Norwich to Worcester. Putnam and Danielsonville were then out-of-the-way places. Here was the first Post-office established between Boston and Hartford. Gen. Lemuel Grosvenor was the Postmaster, and retained his office more than forty years. He resigned a short time before his death, which occurred Jan. 7th, 1834.

Fifty years ago, the tavern, well patronized by travellers, and altogether too much by citizens—three stores with many customers—a lawyer's office with law students and much business—together with what might be termed the "Medical school" at Doctor Hubbard's office—gave the place an animated, business aspect that has long since disappeared.

The observance of the Sabbath was then enforced by law. It was the duty of deacons as well as of grand jurors to arrest Sabbath travellers. This was often done, and the offenders were tried on the following day and fined. One man was fined for securing his hay on the Sabbath.

The people attended meeting more generally then, than now. The line of chaises (no wagons then) and the throng of people on horseback and on foot, filling the street at the close of worship on the Sabbath, pre-



sented to my young eyes the most animating scene of the week.

The second pastor of the church I remember, and the feelings of veneration and sympathy excited in me, on going to his house, or seeing him in the public assembly. He belonged to a former generation, and seemed like an associate of the apostles. The fact that he had lost his voice, and could only speak in a whisper, helped to increase my veneration. The long mournful procession at his funeral, with ministers as pall-bearers, left an abiding impression on my memory.

The Rev. Asa King, I remember as an able and successful minister rather than as the (third) Pastor of this church. A single incident may illustrate his fidelity and tact as a christian teacher. He came here on a visit. In taking leave of a certain family, he said to the wife and mother, a most exemplary woman, but not a member of the church—"Mrs. H—I have been looking over the records of the church, and I did not find your name—ought it not to be there?" The appeal was most touching. That name, I trust, is now in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Rev. James Porter, the fourth pastor, was earnest, devout, faithful—ready for every good word and work. The Sabbath evening conference meetings, especially at the North school-house,—at which Deacon Payson, Deacon Oliver Grosvenor, Job Williams, (afterwards Deacon) and Oliver C. Grosvenor, were the prominent speakers—full, interesting and solemn—the concert as at first observed on the first Monday evening of each month with its contribution—the catechizing of the children of the church by the pastor at the meeting-house, once or twice a year—the formation of a Bible-class to meet at the parsonage during the week—the organization of the first Sabbath School with one class of boys and two classes of

girls, with Major Copeland, Superintendent and teacher of the boys class—these are some of the prominent points in my memory of Mr. Porter's ministry. In the Sabbath School we only rehearsed scripture. Some of the girls would commit to memory more than a thousand verses a week. Mr. Porter was a zealous and efficient worker in the temperance cause. The first movements on this subject, and the ridicule and opposition they encountered, are fresh in my memory, as, also, are many of the sad evidences of the need of such a movement. Mr. Benjamin White, of Providence, gave me this reminiscence ; Mr. Porter had attended a meeting at Thompson, at which the temperance question had been discussed. In giving an account of the meeting to his own people, he said :—“ They *talked* well—they *talked* right—but spoiled it all by *taking their grog* before they left.” Mr. P. practiced and earnestly advocated *total abstinence*.

I recollect but a single instance of admission to the church, previous to the revival of 1821. Two persons were received on profession of their faith ; one was Sylvanus Backus, a prominent lawyer, and a member of Congress, the other a poor widow, of small intellect, in feeble health, and entirely dependent on others for the means of support. The wide contrast between the two, as they stood together, to confess Christ, their common Lord and Redeemer, in whom the whole Church is one, made an impression never to be erased.

My friends, as we here to-day recount the worthy deeds of our fathers, and remember all the way in which the Lord our God hath led us, as a church, these hundred and fifty years, let us renew the consecration of ourselves to God—let us gird up the loins of our minds, and watch and pray, and work, till the summons shall come, and we be gathered to our fathers, to be forever with the Lord.



## GREETING OF THE ELIOT CHURCH IN ROXBURY,

BY ITS PASTOR,

REV. A. C. THOMPSON.

Reverend and beloved, the Pastor and members of this First Church in Pomfret:—The Eliot church in Roxbury, Massachusetts, salutes you to-day. As the pastor of that church, I am peculiarly happy in being present on your invitation, at this delightful jubilee, and to bring you the hearty congratulations of those in that city who hold the same faith and polity with yourselves.

It has appeared repeatedly among the reminiscences of this occasion that the original proprietors of your township, and the first members of your church, as well as its first pastor, the Rev. Ebenezer Williams, were from Roxbury. There then, in some sense, is your mother country. We fully appreciate the interest with which your thoughts turn to the home of John Eliot. We suppose that his tour among the Indians of this region, "The Nipmuck Country," in the years 1673-4, was the circumstance which first called the attention of people there to this section, then a wilderness, and led ultimately to its settlement. Referring to such missionary excursions, that apostolic man says in one of his letters, "I have not been dry night nor day, from the third day of the week unto the sixth, but so travelled, and at night pull off my boots, wring my stockings and on with them again, and so continue. But God steps in and helps." When certain Indian chiefs threatened him, his reply, as you recollect, was, "I am about the work of the

Great God, and my God is with me ; so that I fear neither you nor all the Sachems in the country. I will go on, and do you touch me if you dare."

In 1683, the colony of Massachusetts granted to Roxbury a tract seven miles square, at Quatosset, afterwards called New Roxbury, but later known as Woodstock, your neighboring town. The grant contained this condition, that there should be settled within two years, and maintained, "an able, an orthodox godly minister." Eliot was then seventy-nine years of age. His prayers, no doubt, often went up in behalf of the enterprise. That movement, which also prepared the way for the settlement of your town, and organization of your church, was one which largely occupied the attention of people there at that period. Our town records from 1683 onward for many years, give to no one subject a larger space than to that.

At the age of 86 that apostolic man, among whose last words were, "welcome joy," finished his long and laborious career, and was welcomed, we doubt not, with the salutation, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

This memorable church of Pomfret came into being during the ministry of Eliot's successor, Nehemiah Walter, who had been two years colleague with him and whom Whitefield speaks of as a "Good old Puritan." The pastorates of those two men covered a period of one hundred and eighteen consecutive years.

It is perhaps known to you as a matter of historical record that "The people of Roxbury were of the best that came over," that they were "not of the poorer sort." It is certainly a matter for thanksgiving that your fathers enjoyed the ministry of such godly men as Eliot and Walter, whose impress may not improbably still be traced among yourselves.

At the period when this church was organized, the



names of Chandler, Craft, and Gore, of Grosvenor, Ruggles, and Sabin, of Tucker, Williams, and White, were honored names there. Chief Justice Paul Dudley was a communicant, as well as his distinguished father, Governor Joseph Dudley, who, like his cotemporary, Saltonstall, of Connecticut, and your present Chief Magistrate, was an exemplary christian.

In later times the First Church of Roxbury has, as you are aware, adopted a faith differing from that of the fathers. We cannot refrain from expressing our marked satisfaction that no such change has taken place among you. It is as those standing in an apostolic succession, bearing the name and representing the sentiments of Eliot, that we have been invited, and are happy to express our fraternal salutation to-day.

On leaving home I took with me two ancient volumes, one of them a series of Sacramental Sermons, the other entitled, "The Wonderfulness of Christ," by Nehemiah Walters. Finding that so far as it appears these works are not in the possession of any one residing here, I desire that you will kindly accept the same. They will indicate the teachings under which the views and character of your fathers were formed. I learn that you have no Church Library. May I be permitted to express the hope that these two Puritan productions may form the nucleus of a collection to be owned by yourselves, and to accumulate for the use of your present and future pastors.

It is my pleasure also, to bring to this Sabbath School, the greetings of the Eliot Sabbath School in Roxbury. There is perhaps no other early New England name with which the religious instruction of the young is more suitably and fully associated, than that of John Eliot. He prepared catechisms for the children. On the records during his pastorate, is the

following minute: "This day we restored a primitive practice for ye training up of our youth. 1st, That the male youth (in fitting season) stay, every Sabbath, after morning exercise, and the elders examine their remembrance in every part of the catechism. 2d, That the female youth should also meet in one place and their elders examine their remembrance in the catechism, and whatever else may convene." This bears the date, "1674, 6th, 10th month—the same year as one of the missionary tours I have referred to; and that was perhaps the oldest Sabbath School established on this continent. It was a saying and a principle with John Eliot, that "The care of the lambs is one third part of the charge over the Church of God." Sitting in one of your parlors this morning, I opened an elegant Bible, and found a note indicating that it was a gift from yourselves, a token of gratitude and affection to your beloved and faithful Superintendent.\* At the bottom of the note is a reference to John's Gospel, 21:15. It was that passage which suggested the maxim I have just given, the memorable charge of our Lord to Peter being, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep; feed my sheep."

The dates standing conspicuously on the first page of your programme are suggestive. 1715—1865. How unlike was the Pomfret, the New England and our whole country of that day to what they now are! The first news paper published on this Continent—"The Boston News Letter"—had been in existence only eleven years. There was no printing done in Rhode Island, Maryland, Virginia or the Carolinas. The first schooner had been built only one year, and the first post office established in the country only five years. Eliot once wrote a letter to a friend in England, and sent it by the way of Virginia and through

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\*Lewis Williams, M. D.



Spain. At the date of your organization the first printing press in Connecticut had been at work only six years ; while the whole population of Connecticut was equal to but half the present number of inhabitants of Roxbury. A highly respected lady born in Boston 81 years ago, told me to-day that when a mere child she was once lost in a pasture near where the Revere House now stands in that city. In 1715, Yale College was still at Saybrook ; the founder of Pennsylvania was still living ; President Edwards was still a youth, and Benjamin Franklin a school-boy ; but Washington and Putnam were not yet born. What changes have an hundred and fifty years wrought within our borders ! What vast strides in territorial enlargement, numerical increase, civil and social advancement, and most of all in the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ !

We rejoice with you, brethren, in the happy national auspices under which you celebrate this jubilee. We rejoice with you in the hallowed reminiscences of an hundred and fifty years of local history, the periods of special divine quickening among you, the stated seasons of sacramental fellowship, and the treasured memories of your saintly dead. Holding like precious faith with yourselves, and in anticipation of the Great Jubilee when all true churches of our Lord shall be gathered together in one, I give you in behalf of the Eliot church, this right hand of fraternal greeting.

REV. MR. WEBBER'S ADDRESS.

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Christian Friends :—At this late hour of the day, and after the “feast of reason and flow of soul” that we have enjoyed, my part of the entertainment might well be dispensed with. I shall detain you only a few moments. I should not indeed consent to say anything, as the twilight is now darkening around us, did I not desire to express my great pleasure in being with you on this anniversary occasion. It is something more than a pleasure. There is an earnest, solemn feeling in being here, surpassing anything of the kind I have ever felt, as I have been carried back to-day by the historical discourse and papers to which we have listened, to “remember the days of old,” and “consider the years of many generations.” Standing as I do amid the scenes of my childhood, with my heart full of childhood’s holiest memories, I feel somehow as Jacob did, when he awoke out of his Bethel-dream, “and he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place ! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

You will not expect me, who am not old, to entertain you with reminiscences of the past. My memory goes not back of the dedication of this meeting-house, which is the remotest thing of which I have any distinct recollection. I remember of seeing the Rev. Mr. Porter, and of hearing the people speak of him with great respect and affection ; but it was years after his dismissal from the pastorate of this church. Mr. Benidict was my first pastor. He baptized me. I was but a little child when he went away. I recall him as a very dignified gentleman, somewhat precise



and stiff in his manners. [I remember one day—being called in from play, hastily washed and dressed, and ushered into his presence, and of having an awful sense of it. His sermons I could not understand, of course, but I recollect of thinking he preached very long. One instance I recall distinctly. I then supposed that in making a sermon the minister took his text, talked about so long on each word, till he had gone through it. On the occasion to which I refer, the text began with the word, “*moreover.*” After sitting with my legs hanging over the bench till they ached, I was thinking it must be about time for him to stop, when my ears caught the word *moreover*; whereupon, I sank back into my seat in utter despair, wondering if he has not gotten by the first word of the text, when on earth will he have done with it!]

The first pastor of this church whose sermons I was old enough to understand was the Rev. Mr. Hunt, to-day, by the blessing of God, with us, though no longer pastor, to add by his presence and interesting historic papers to the pleasure of the occasion. As he has given an account of those who filled the sacred office before him in this place, I should be glad to express my recollections of him and my estimate of his services. But this, time, and perhaps propriety, will not allow. Yet so much my heart urges me to say. Since leaving you, about twenty years ago, I have pursued, to some extent, the paths of science and of literature. I have listened to lectures on philosophy and theology from the ablest minds of this and other lands. I have heard the sermons of some of the ablest preachers of the age, but I can truly say, I have never read or heard anything which made so deep an impression on my mind at the time, which staid by me so long, and which has done me so much good for time, and I

trust for eternity, as the sermons which in my boyhood I heard within these sacred walls from the lips of my much beloved friend and spiritual father who sits here at my right hand. I say this as my testimony to the power of preaching upon the minds of the young, as well as to the ability and affectionate faithfulness of my former pastor, and I am sure that the young people who have gone out from this place to other places, some of whom have returned with me to-day, would, if they had opportunity, bear the same testimony, and now, sir, in their behalf and my own, I want to take you by the hand, and in this public place, thank you for all the good you have done me and this people, in the name of Christ. God bless you, sir, and grant you yet many years of happy leisure, sheltered in the affection of this first and only people of your charge.

Let me also take you, sir, (Rev. Mr. Alexander) by the hand, in expression of my interest in you—till now a stranger—as the pastor of this church where the infancy of my religious life was cradled. May your head be as clear, your heart as pure, your years of labor as many, as useful and acceptable, as have been those of your predecessor.

To-day we have been led to think and speak much with each other of the things that change. But I thank God there are some things that do not change. God is unchangeable. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. That Bible there does not alter. *Semper idem* is written on its every truth and promise. That text which I see, in letters of evergreen, overarching this desk, is happily chosen, “His truth endureth to all generations.” The same doctrines, in substance, which the fathers, who founded this church one hundred and fifty years ago believed and taught, we their children believe and teach. “All



flesh is grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away : but the word of the Lord endureth forever, and this *is* the word which by the Gospel is preached unto *you*." Human nature too is unchanged.

Customs and manners alter, but the human soul with its weakness and debasement on the one side, and its affinities and unquenchable aspirations for God on the other, is the same to-day as ever. And lastly, the effects of the preaching of the truth upon the soul are imperishable. The old sanctuary in which we worshipped, may rot in the weather, and be torn down, but every impression of truth received, every holy feeling, every right impulse awakened within its walls, are built into one immortality, and will endure forever. These things are full of encouragement to me. With such thoughts as these, shall we not go from these solemn and deeply interesting commemorative services to our separate places of abode, with new heart to work in the common cause of our Lord and Saviour ? Though this anniversary day reminds us how quickly one generation goeth and another cometh, though these few leaves of autumn tell how we all do fade, though the solemn tolling of the bell announces that one after another of those we love are passing away, though the changing forms of outward things suggest with what a swift but noiseless rush the objects of the senses are hastening to their final dissolution—yet, for all this, will we not slack our hand one whit, but toil on—knowing that albeit the fashion of the world passeth away, he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

Thanking you for your attention to these remarks at this late hour, expressing again the joy I feel in being on " my native heath " once more in such pleasant

circumstances, and praying, as my heart ever shall,  
God bless the first church of Christ in Pomfret, I  
bid you good night.



# A P P E N D I X .

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## ORDER OF EXERCISES.

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### M O R N I N G .

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Voluntary, - - - - -  
Anthem, - - - The Lord is my Strength.  
Reading of Scriptures and Prayer,

By Rev. Daniel Hunt.

#### ANNIVERSARY ODE,

By a Member of the Church.

##### I.

Joyfully come we before Thee this day,  
Lord of our lives, our reason, our strength!  
A Church that long years' has continued to pray,  
And that Thou has blest throughout the years length;  
Trusting that thus a token is given,  
That we have a name in the kingdom of Heaven.

##### II.

Friends from afar! we greet you to-day,  
Gathered once more by our Mother, the Church,  
One common interest she bids us to pay,  
While each for "the truth in Jesus" must search.  
Kindly re-unions encourage the heart,  
In the weal of the Church, Christian love hath full part.

##### III.

Nor shall we forget those who come never more,  
From the Home far above, where their spirits find rest;





Historical Paper—The Pastors of the Church,

By Rev. Daniel Hunt.

The Memory of the Rev. Aaron Putnam, the Second

Pastor of the Church, by

Hon. David P. Hall, of New York.

Reminiscences of Pomfret,

By A. Putnam Storrs,

Of Owego, N. Y.

Anthem.—How beautiful upon the mountains.

#### THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

Hymn.—Happy greeting to all.

Address.

- - -

By Rev. H. C. Trumbull,  
of Hartford.

Hymn.—'Tis Anniversary Day.

Address,

- -

By Mr. Hawley of Hartford.

Hymn.—A Hundred Years to come.

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#### A F T E R N O O N .

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Voluntary,

- - - - -

Anthem.—Praise waiteth for thee, O God in Zion.

Historical Paper.—Meeting-houses of Pomfret,

BY REV. DANIEL HUNT.

#### HYMN.

Tune. Lisbon.

I.

I love thy kingdom, Lord,—

The house of thine abode,

The church our blest Redeemer saved,

With his own precious blood.

## II.

I love thy church, O God!  
 Her walls before thee stand,  
 Dear as the apple of thine eye,  
 And graven on thy hand.

## III.

For her my tears shall fall,  
 For her my prayers ascend;  
 To her my cares and toils be given,  
 Till toils and cares shall end.

## Address.—Personal Recollections,

By Rev. C. P. Grosvenor, of Canterbury.

## HYMN.

Tune. Concord.

## I.

The hill of Zion yields  
 A thousand sacred sweets,  
 Before we reach the golden fields,  
 Or walk the golden streets.

Then let our songs abound,  
 And every tear be dry;  
 We're marching through Immanuel's ground  
 To fairer worlds on high.

## Address.—The Old Churches of the Hills; the Nurseries of those in the Valleys,

By Rev. George Soule, of Hampton.

## HYMN.

Tune. Invitation.

Come my beloved, haste away,  
 Cut short the hours of thy delay;  
 Fly like a youthful hart or roe,  
 Over the hills where spices grow.

## Address.—Congregationalism admits of the broadest Christian fellowship; it reaches the hand of brotherhood to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

By Rev. Andrew Dunning, of Thompson.

## The Greeting of the Parent Church in Roxbury to her Eldest-born, the First Church of Christ in Pomfret.

By Augustus C. Thompson, D. D., of Roxbury.



## HYMN.

Tune.      Lenox.

## I.

Ye tribes of Adam join,  
 With heaven, and earth, and seas,  
 And offer notes divine,  
 To your Creator's praise.  
 Ye holy throng      |      In words of light,  
 Of angels bright,      |      Begin the song.

## II.

Let all the people fear  
 The God that rules above.  
 He brings his people near,  
 And makes them taste his love.  
 While earth and sky      |      His saints shall raise  
 Attempt his praise,      |      His honors high.

Religion—The source from which Art derives its highest conceptions.      By Henry Dexter, of Cambridgeport, Mass.

Historical Paper—Steps of Progress,  
 By Rev. Daniel Hunt.

## HYMN.

Tune.      Coronation.

## I.

All hail the power of Jesus' name!  
 Let angels prostrate fall;  
 Bring forth the royal diadem,  
 And crown him Lord of all.

## II.

Let every kindred, every tribe,  
 On this terrestrial ball,  
 To Him all majesty ascribe,  
 And crown him Lord of all.

Address.      By Rev. Geo. N. Webber, of Lowell, Mass.

Address.      By His Excellency, Gov. Buckingham.

## HYMN.

Tune.      Old Hundred.

(The Congregation are invited to join.)

## I.

Be thou exalted, O my God!  
 Above the heavens where angels dwell;  
 Thy power on earth be known abroad,  
 And land to land thy wonders tell,

## II.

High o'er the earth his mercy reigns,  
And reaches to the utmost sky;  
His truth to endless years remains,  
When lower worlds dissolve and die.

## DOXOLOGY.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!  
Praise Him, all creatures here below!  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host!  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

## BENEDICTION.



Social Re-Union at 7 1-2 o'clock, P. M., at the House of Col. Chas. Mathewson,



## SKETCH OF THE GENERAL HISTORY OF POMFRET.

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BY REV. D. HUNT.

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The tract of land originally known as the "Mashamoquet purchase," and afterwards incorporated as the town of Pomfret, containing fifteen thousand one hundred acres, was deeded by Capt. James Fitch, of Norwich, for the consideration of thirty pounds lawful money, to Samuel Ruggles, Sen., John Chandler, Benjamin Sabin, Samuel Craft, John Grosvenor and Samuel Ruggles, Jr., of Roxbury, Mass., and six other persons whom they might choose to be joint proprietors with them. The persons chosen were, John Pierpont, John White, John Ruggles, John Gore, Samuel Gore and Thomas Morey.

The deed was executed May 5th, 1668. It was signed by James Fitch, also by Owaneco, sachem of the Mohegans, and his son Josiah.

This purchase was confirmed by the General Assembly of Connecticut, with a view to its becoming a town, July 8th, 1686. An agent was employed to survey the "purchase," and to divide one half into twelve parts of equal value, which were, severally, assigned to the proprietors by lot. The remaining one half was held as joint stock.

Some of the proprietors settled upon their lands as soon as the allotment was made; others, at different periods, afterwards; while some never came, but sold the divided part, and ultimately, the whole of their shares.

The town was subsequently enlarged by several purchases—one of Governor Belcher, including the territory lying east of the Mashamoquet purchase, and extending to the Quinebaug river ; another, made by John Blackwell, including the eastern part of the present town of Brooklyn ; another, by William Stoddard, Esq., lying in the western part of Brooklyn, and in the eastern part of Hampton ; and lastly, by a narrow strip of land lying between the Mashamoquet purchase and the Stoddard Land, which was made by Mr. Benjamin.

The original purchase, being a part of the country called the “Wabbaquasset Hills,” was once a favorite residence of the Indians. Some families were residing here, when the first white people came, and the remains of their habitations continued many years.

The geological formation of this town gives character to its scenery and to its soil. The hills, many of which have considerable elevation, are oblong with their shortest axes from east to west, and are curved with great regularity. Dr. Dwight in his travels in New England, says of Pomfret,—“It is, to my eye, one of the most beautiful townships in this region. The hills are universally arched obtusely from North to South, with narrower arches from East to West, and in both cases are remarkably exact and singularly elegant inclosures of stone often described as they bend over the hills, what appears to the eye a perfect arch of a circle.” The stones upon the surface, particularly upon the Mashamoquet purchase, were brought by the “*drift formation*.” The rock, in place, is wholly decomposed on the surface, cropping out only in the valleys and ravines.

The proportion of clay in the soil makes it retentive of water, and consequently stiff and cold in the spring. It also gives more than an average dampness to the



atmosphere throughout the year, and reduces the mean temperature below that of adjoining towns. But the soil is strong—contains a large proportion of organic matter, and when thoroughly worked, gives full returns of grass and grain. There is probably but little land in the state which pays better for the labor which is bestowed upon it.

There are three streams of water winding through this town, which retain their original Indian names. The largest is the Mashamoquet, from which the first purchase took its name. The other two empty into this—viz: the Wappoquians, which runs by the burying ground in the first parish, and the Neewichewanna, which comes from the hills in the south part of the town.

The educational history of the town is worthy of some notice. It appears from the records of the town, that immediately upon the erection of the meeting-house, and before it was finished, they voted to “erect a school-house near the meeting-house.” A committee was also appointed to oversee the affairs of the school, in general. In 1723 there were three schools established and in full operation, one in the center, one in the north and another in the south part of the town. In 1729 it was voted, “to raise one penny on the pound to defray the expenses of the schools,” the town also directed the selectmen to allow any number of families living remote from the established school, upon request, to establish one in their vicinity. Thus arrangements were early made for the instruction of all the youth of the town. These arrangements continued with some modifications, until the dispensation of the “School Fund,” and the system of laws connected therewith.

The early inhabitants made special efforts to furnish themselves with the means of general and useful

knowledge. In 1739, sixteen men raised the sum of two hundred and fifty-four pounds for the establishment of a library. After the formation of the society others quickly joined them, and paid an additional sum of one hundred and eighty-five pounds. With these funds a valuable purchase of books was made in London, and presents of books were also received from gentlemen in England.—There is a vote of thanks on the record of the society, to Rev. Dr. Guise of London, for his published works. To this association, Gen. Israel Putnam was admitted Aug. 27th, 1753, and paid sixteen pounds “old tenor.”

The early history of this town in the cause of civil freedom is most honorable. The first inhabitants were themselves free men; they belonged to a race who, like their pastor and teacher, John Elliot, “knew no king but Jesus.” They considered all others to be usurpers, both temporally and spiritually. In the belief and practice of this sentiment, they lived through the colonial state. The character of Putnam was but an exponent of the principles and feelings of the people around him; the inhabitants of this vicinity made the man.

The following letter from the Selectmen of Boston to the Selectmen of Pomfret, July 8th, 1774, when the British troops were quartered there, will show the state of feeling in both places :

Gentlemen :—By the hand of Mr. Elias Wells we received your generous and kind benefaction for the poor of this distressed town. We cannot enough express our gratitude for this instance of your bounty, in which you have liberally contributed to the relief of many. What you have thus lent to the Lord, we trust and pray that He will pay you again. It gives us great consolation amidst our complicated and unparelled sufferings, that our brethren in other colonies show



such christian sympathy and true benevolence towards us. That we are greatly distressed needs no comment. Our harbor blockaded by a fleet of ships ; our foreign trade actually annihilated ; thousands of poor reduced to extreme want ; troops continually pouring in upon us to insult us in our distress ; is a consideration that must excite the pity of the most obdurate. However, although we thus suffer, we are willing to suffer still more, rather than give up our birthright privileges. With great regard, we are your brethren and humble servants."

In 1774, a company was formed in this town, with reference to the threatening appearance of the times. Stephen Brown was the captain, subsequently killed at the taking of Mud Fort, and Thomas Grosvenor, afterwards Colonel, the Lieutenant. Immediately after the news of the battle of Lexington, this company marched to Cambridge, and was engaged in the battle of Bunker Hill, where three Pomfret men were killed, and fifteen wounded.

At a town meeting in March, 1779, the town voted to appoint a committee to supply the families of the poor, whose husbands and fathers were gone into service. Then the question was put, whether the town would take any measures to encourage and promote the speedy raising and enlisting of men to fill up the number to be raised in the town, according to the proposal of the Governor and council,—passed in the affirmative. Also, voted, and agreed to firmly unite among ourselves, and strictly to adhere to the laws regulating prices, and to use our joint and several influences, to support and maintain the same as a very important regulation, for the support of the army, and preventing every measure, artfully taken for the oppression of the poor. Also, voted that the sum of twenty-four pounds, lawful money, be paid to each ef-

fective man that has or shall enlist into the Continental army, for three years or during the war, in this town, by the 7th day of April, next; not exceeding eighty men." This money appears to have been raised partly by subscriptions, and partly by tax.

Under this encouragement, seventy-one men, from this town, enlisted into the continental service. The town paid them a bounty of three thousand four hundred and seven pounds; and for the support of their families, two thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine pounds, in all, six thousand two hundred and ninety-six pounds; or twenty thousand nine hundred and sixty-five dollars, (\$20,965).

Since the Revolution, the history of Pomfret has been that of a quiet agricultural town, varied by the small occasions which arise in such a community. We have no watch-power. The construction of railroads has changed the course of travel in relation to us and moved the centres of business. Parts of the town have been pared off to make other towns. Our surface has been contracted, our population diminished. But what remains, we love,—our soil is valuable. We hope that the character and the spirit of freedom, which belonged to the original inhabitants will go down through all the generations to come.

This town undoubtedly took its name from the celebrated town of Pontefract, (or Pomfret) situated on the Aire in the West Riding of the Yorkshire, England, for that was the only place in the world, which held this name at the time the town was incorporated. But why, I have been unable to learn. I do not find that any of the original proprietors came from that part of Yorkshire. It may be that the famous Castle of Pomfret, where so many persons of royal blood and heirs the throne perished—making Earl Rivers exclaim,



“ O Pomfret, Pomfret; O thou bloody prison! fatal and ominous to noble peers,”—was brought to the mind of the fathers by the sight of these hills and steeps, inspiring the hope that here all royalty and oppression and whatsoever lusteth against civil and religious freedom, should forever die.

Respecting the original name as applied to the ancient English town and castle—which means “ Broken Bridge”—(from the Latin pons and frango) there are some pleasant traditions.

One is connected with the history of St. William, Archbishop of York. He was returning from Rome, whence he had received the pall—was met by such crowds of people who assembled to crave his blessing that a bridge over the Aire, broke down and great numbers fell into the water. The holy prelate was greatly moved at the sight, and prayed for them so fervently and with such acceptance that not one perished. This event occurred Sunday, feast of Ascension, A. D. 1154.

There is some doubt about the miraculous part of the above legend, but none that the town derives its name from the decay or breaking down of some bridge near by.

The following are the names of the persons who first signed the agreement to sustain the preaching of the gospel in this town, May 3rd, 1713 :—Benjamin Sabin, John Sabin, Nathaniel Gary, Benjamin Sitton, Samuel Gates, Edward Payson, Samuel Paine, John Cummings, Samuel Warner, Josiah Sabin, Thomas Goodell, Seth Paine, Philemon Chandler, Daniel Allen, David Allen, Joseph Tucker, Lemuel Taylor, Leicester Grosvenor, Ebenezer Grosvenor, Benjamin Sabin, Jr., Jeremiah Sabin, Stephen Sabin, Ebenezer Sabin.

## DEACONS OF THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST OF POMFRET.

The first Deacons were Denjamin Sabin and Philemon Chandler. Dea. Sabin was one of the original proprietors of the town. He was the first of the twenty-three persons who signed the agreement to sustain the preaching of the gospel. He was also chairman of committee for building the meeting house. He died 1725, aged 80 years.

Dea. Chandler was one of said building committee. He gave the town the burying ground, which was accepted by vote March 24, 1719. He died 1752, aged 81 years.

Ebenezer Holbrook chosen ——. Died Jan. 6, 1768, aged —.

Samuel Sumner chosen ——. Died Feb. 8, 1782, aged 87 years. He was the father of Rev. Dr. Joseph Sumner, of Shrewsbury, Mass.

Jonathan Dresser, chosen Jan. 25, 1758. Died Jan. 17, 1790.

John Holbrook, chosen probably as successor to his father, Dea. Ebenezer, March 6, 1768. Died 1778.

David Williams, chosen Oct. 4, 1759. Moved to Woodstock, and dismissed to the church there 1792.

Simon Cotton, chosen Sept. 2, 1778. Died July 16, 1819, aged 79 years.

Caleb Hayward was chosen Nov. 10, 1785. Died Jan. 22, 1823, aged 91 years.

John H. Payson, chosen June 16, 1800. Died July 12, 1825, aged 61 years.

William Sabin, chosen June 16, 1800. Died Nov. 15, 1814, aged 73 years.

Oliver Grosvenor, chosen May 9, 1805. Died May 13, 1824, aged 81 years.



Job Williams, chosen Jan. 9, 1819. Died March 5, 1863, aged 78 years.

Zephaniah Williams, chosen July 5, 1822. Died April 25, 1838, aged 61 years.

Lewis Averill, chosen June 29, 1838.

George B. Mathewson, chosen August 17, 1855.

## NOTE.

We regret that the eloquent address of His Excellency, Gov. Buckingham, and the very appropriate address of Rev. Mr. Soule could not be secured for publication. With these exceptions this pamphlet is a faithful record of this most interesting anniversary in the history of this ancient church.

## ERRATA.

In a review of the pamphlet the following errors have been detected:  
 On the 9th, 10th, and 13th pages read *maintenance* for *maintainance*.  
 On the 15th page read *and* for *rnd*; *teaching* for *teachin*.  
 On 20th page read *Father's* for *Fathers*.  
 On 48th page read *Palæontologists* for *Palacontologists*.  
 On 59th page read *dissenters* for *dissentions*.  
 On 62d page read *or society* for *on society*.  
 On 84th page read simply, "Address by Rev. Mr. Dunning."  
 " " " read "The Greeting of the Eliot church in Roxbury to the  
 First church of Christ in Pomfret."



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T H E

150TH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN POMFRET, CONN.,

OCTOBER 26, 1865.

SERMON, HISTORICAL PAPERS, ADDRESSES,

WITH APPENDIX.

TRANSCRIPT PRINT, DANIELSONVILLE.

1866.













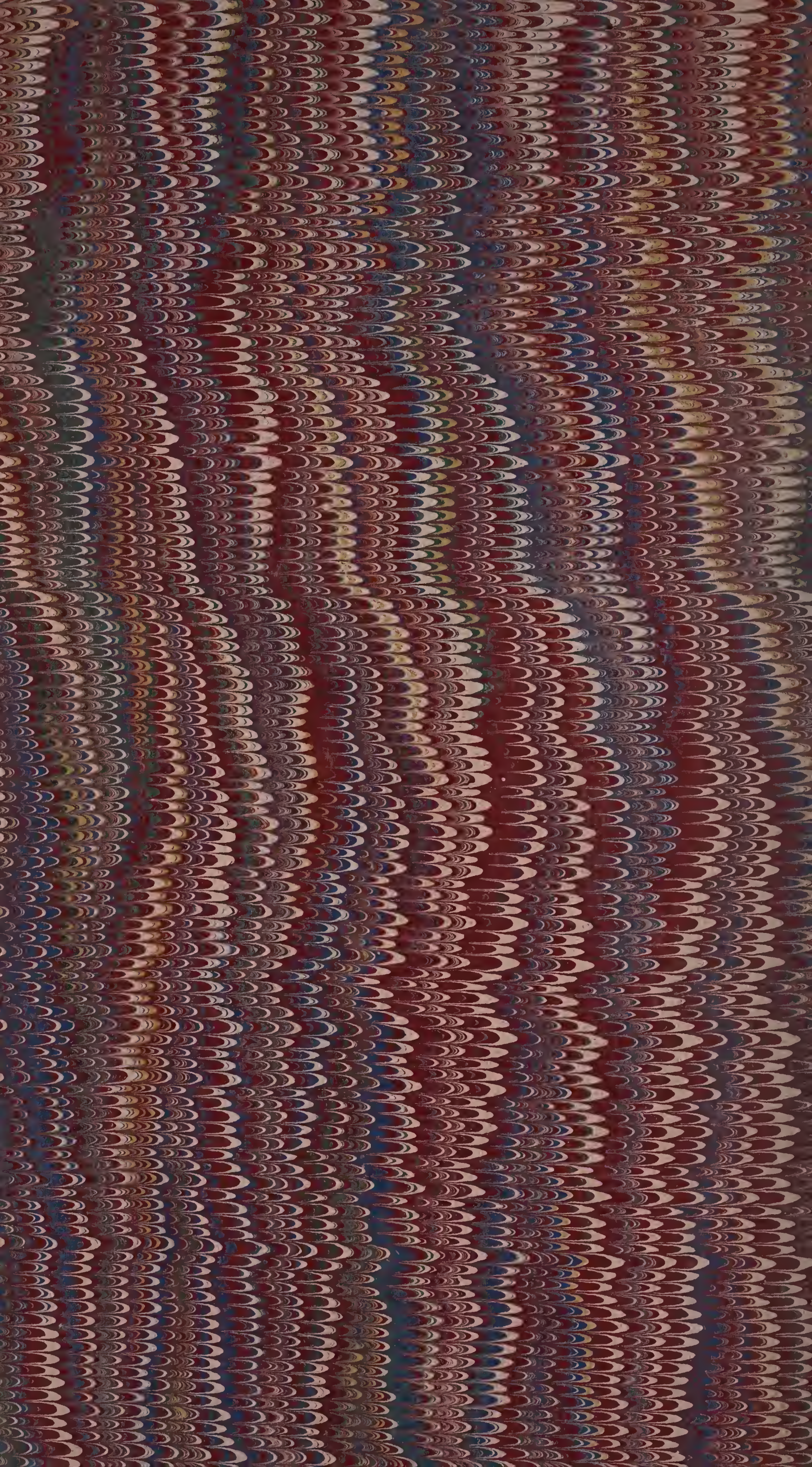




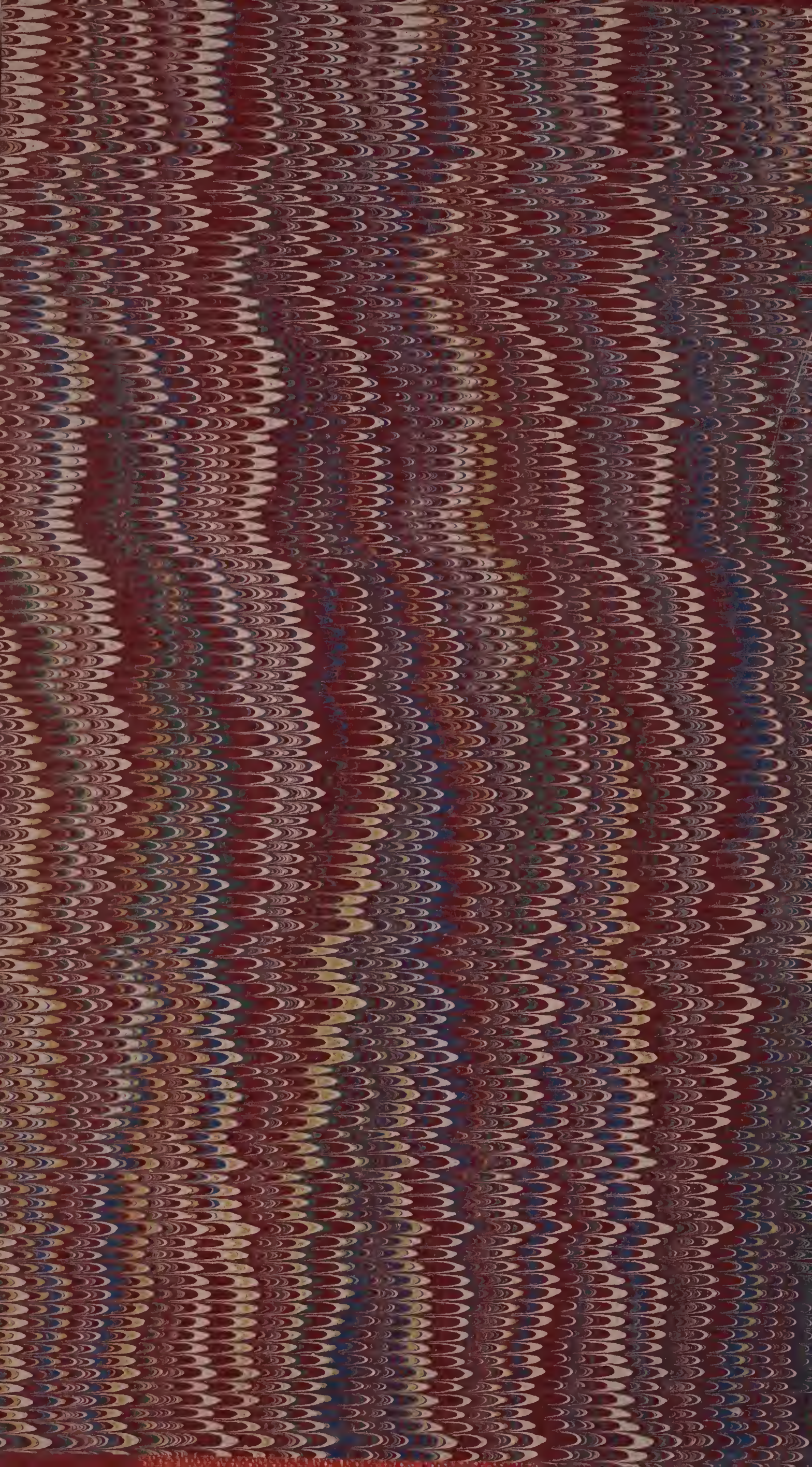














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